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Honda et al.

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(54) **CAPACITOR DEVICE AND METHOD FOR MANUFACTURING SAME**

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USPC 361/814, 821, 830, 517-520, 522, 361/328-329; 307/147, 148, 150; 318/439, 318/538, 722, 801; 320/107, 320
See application file for complete search history.

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 172 days.

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(86) PCT No.: **PCT/JP2011/066404**

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(2), (4) Date: **Feb. 11, 2013**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

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An object of the invention is to provide a capacitor device that can be made slimmer and lighter and that enables the strength and heat dissipation properties to be improved. A capacitor device (1) has a plurality of capacitor units (2) integrally housed within a housing case (3), the housing case (3) having cylindrical housing sections (5) for housing the capacitor bodies. The housing sections (5) are longitudinally aligned in the same direction and are joined together as an integrated whole. A capacitor unit (2) is inserted via an opening (9) at one end of each of the housing sections (5) so that the entire circumference of the capacitor unit (2) is covered by the corresponding housing section (5). The housing sections (5) have a uniform thickness at least on the outer side along the outer periphery of the capacitor units.

(51) **Int. Cl.**

H05K 7/00 (2006.01)

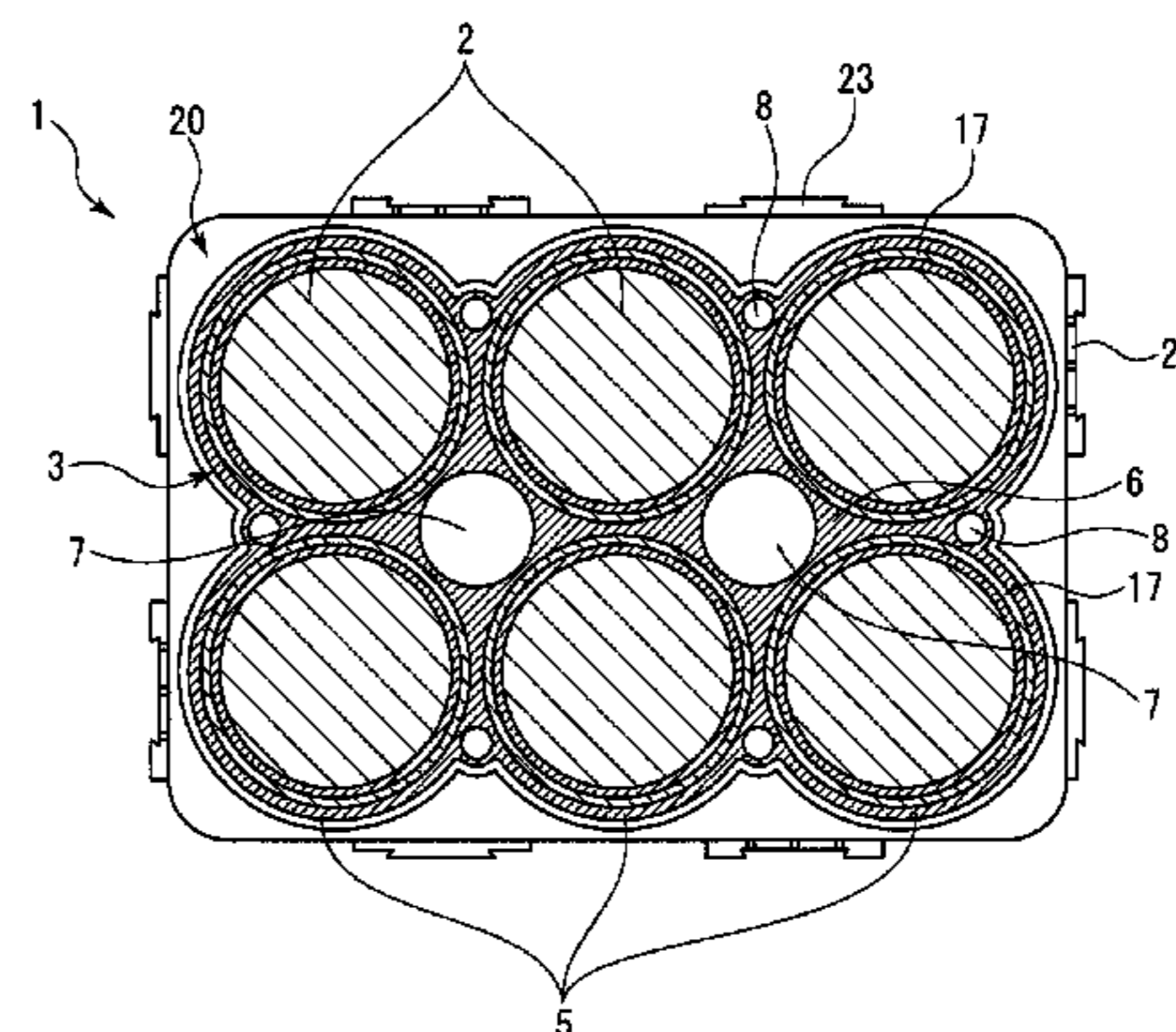
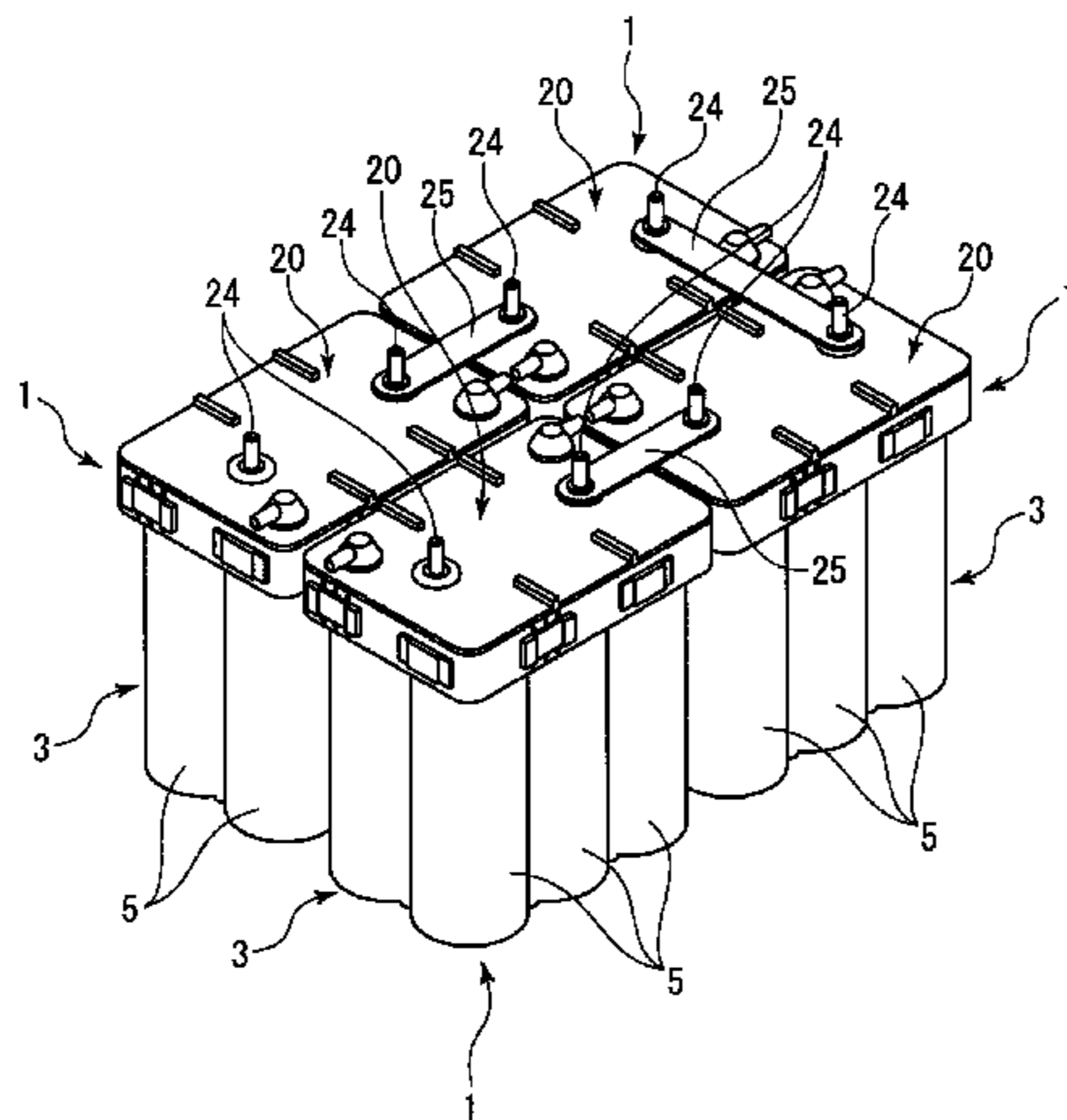
H01G 4/38 (2006.01)

(Continued)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC *H01G 4/38* (2013.01); *H01G 2/02* (2013.01); *H01G 2/04* (2013.01); *H01G 2/10*

1 Claim, 16 Drawing Sheets



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FIG. 1

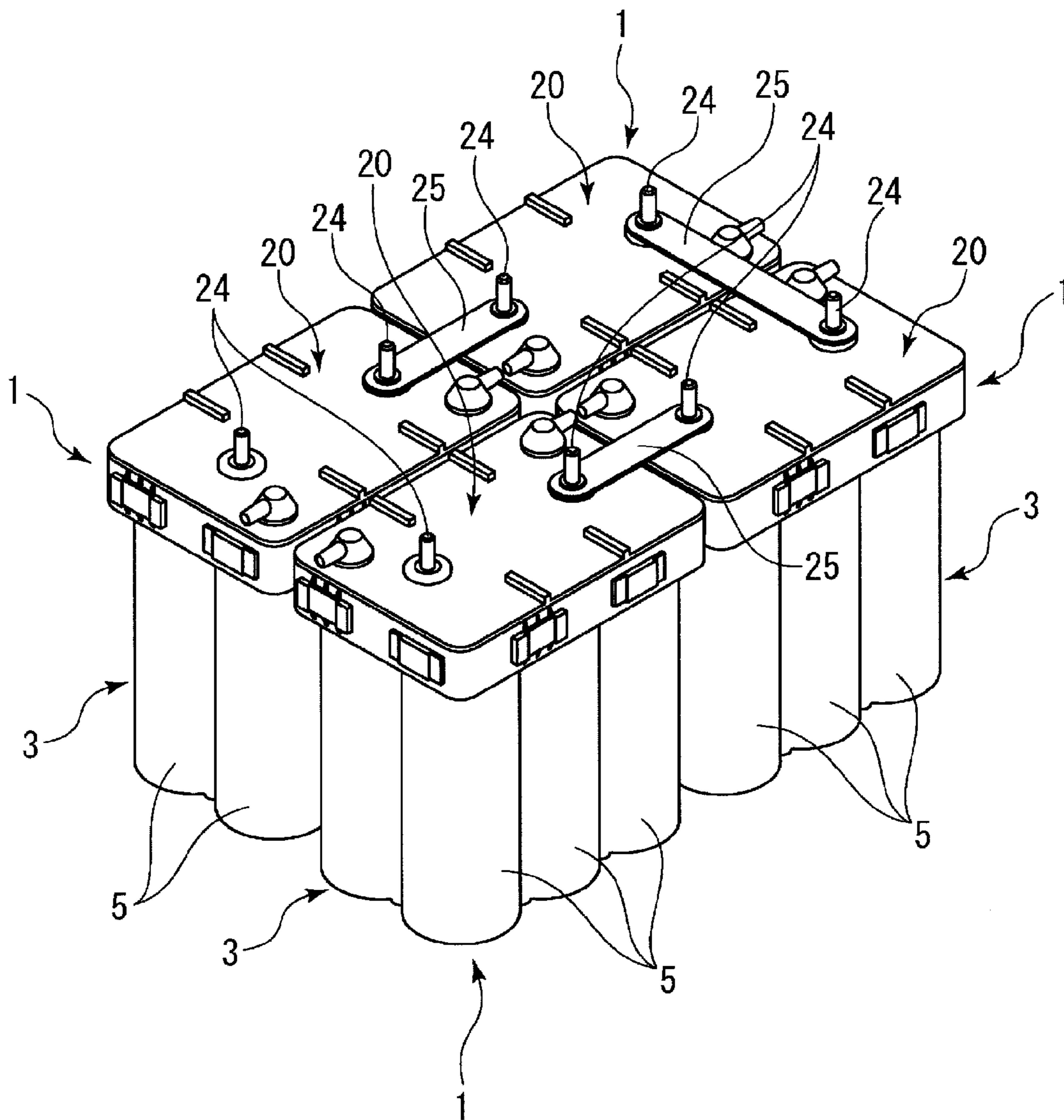


FIG. 2

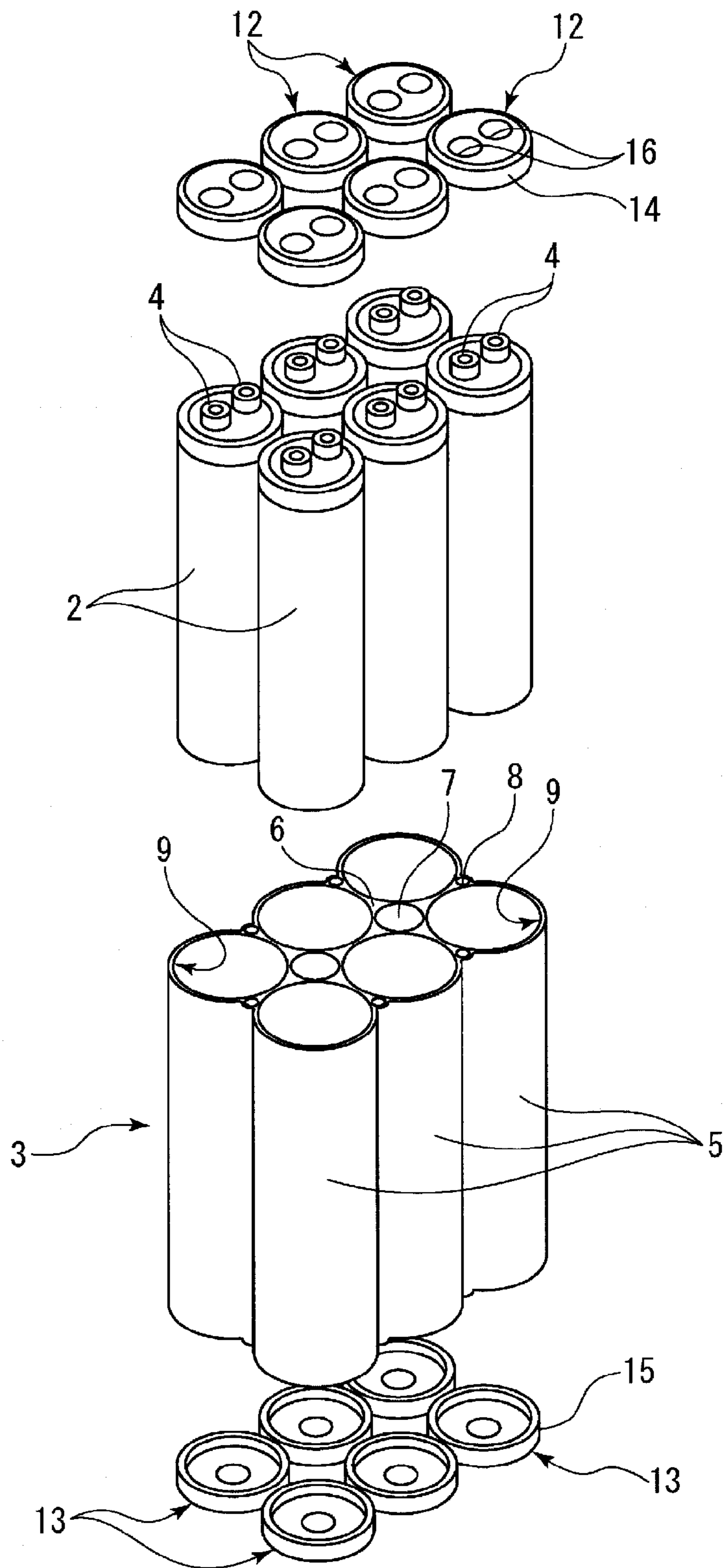


FIG. 3

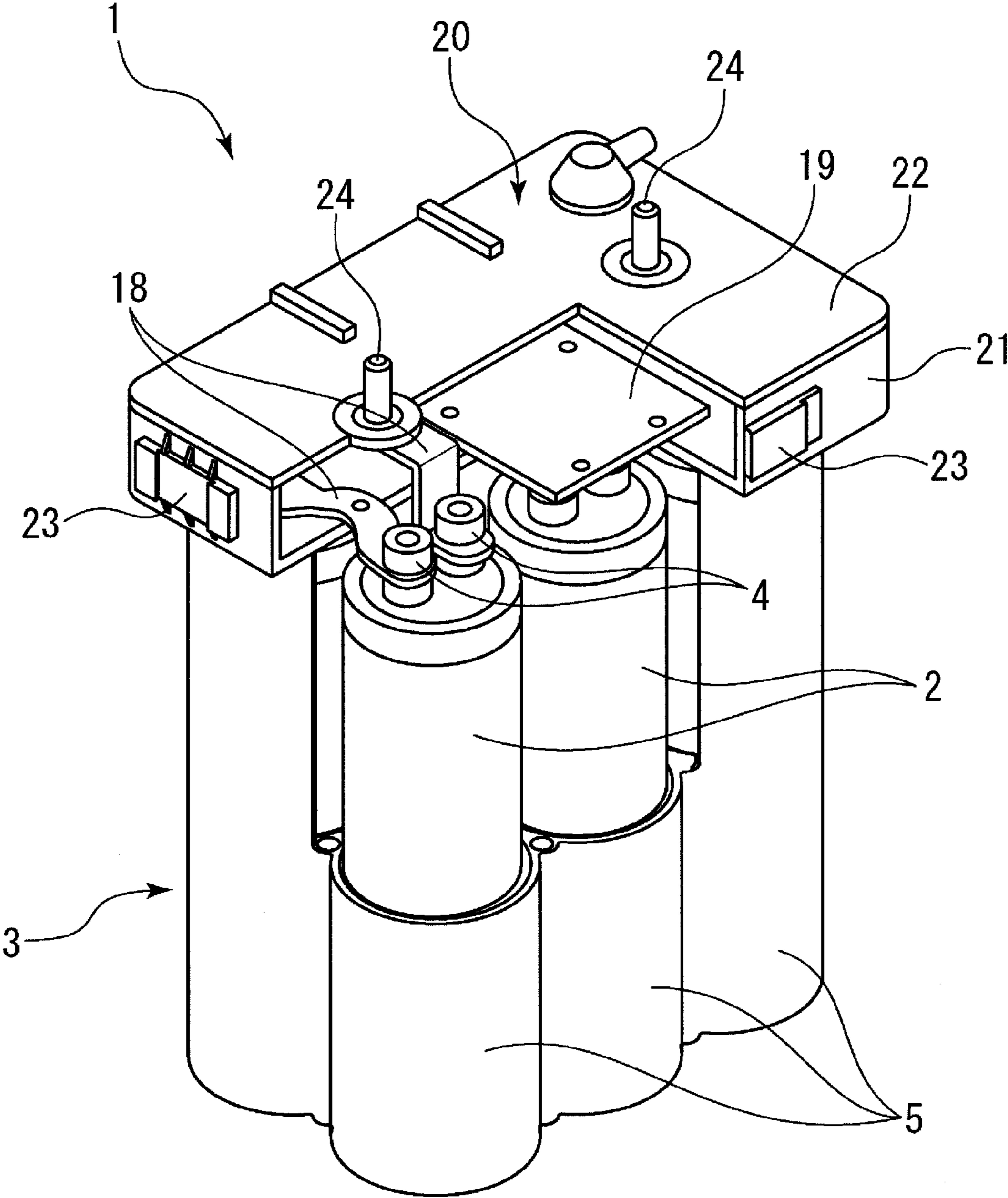


FIG. 4

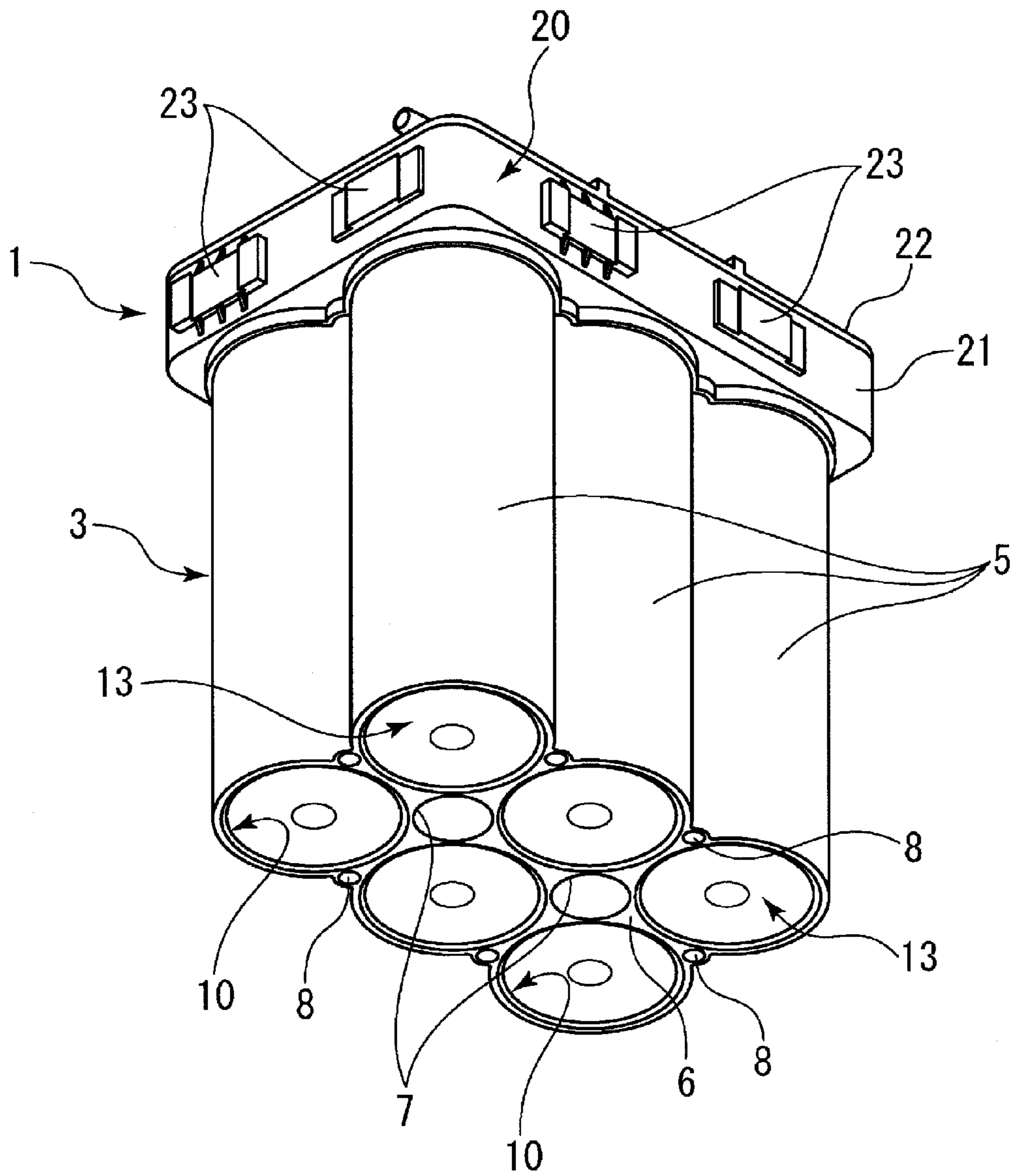


FIG. 5

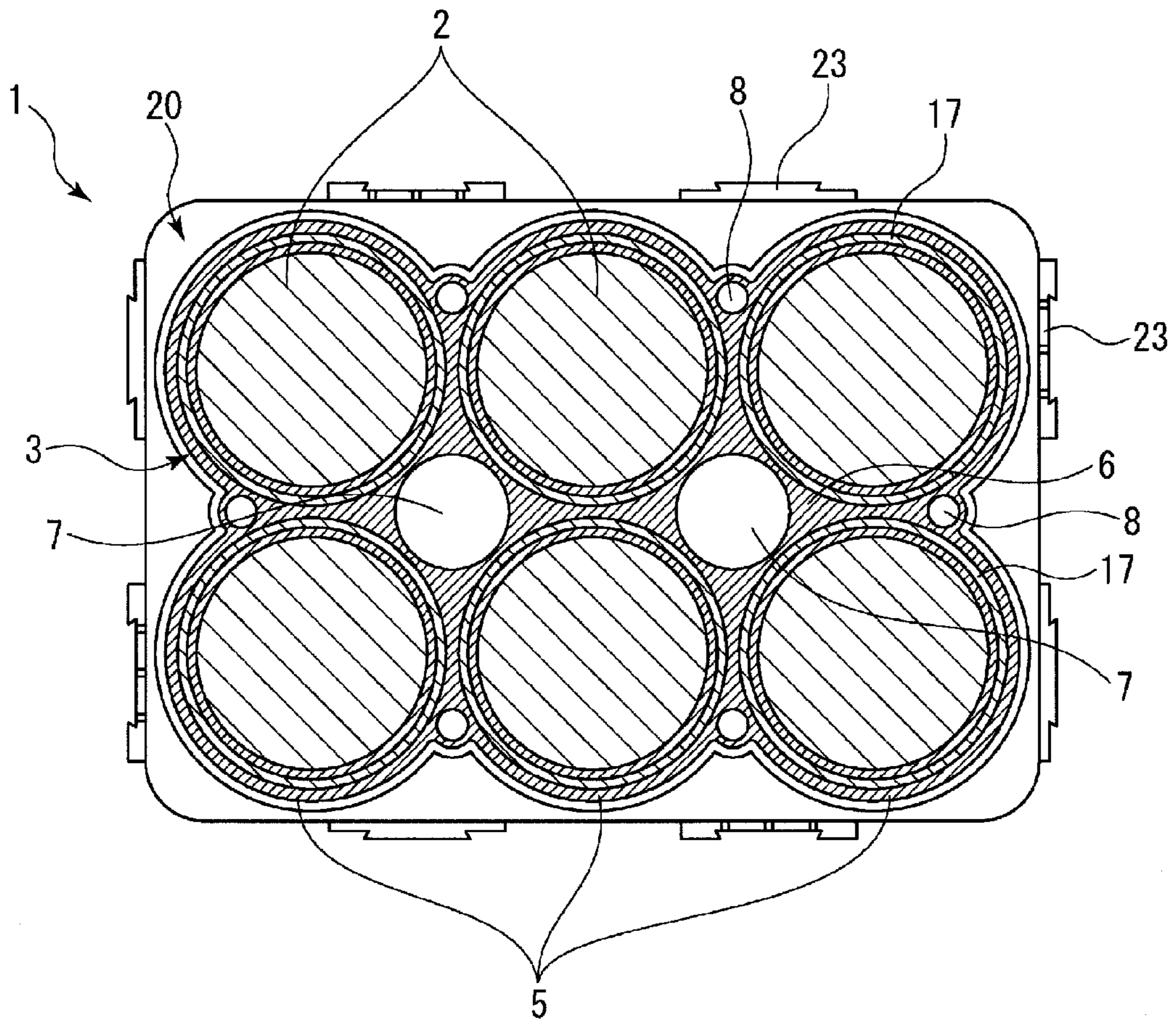


FIG. 6

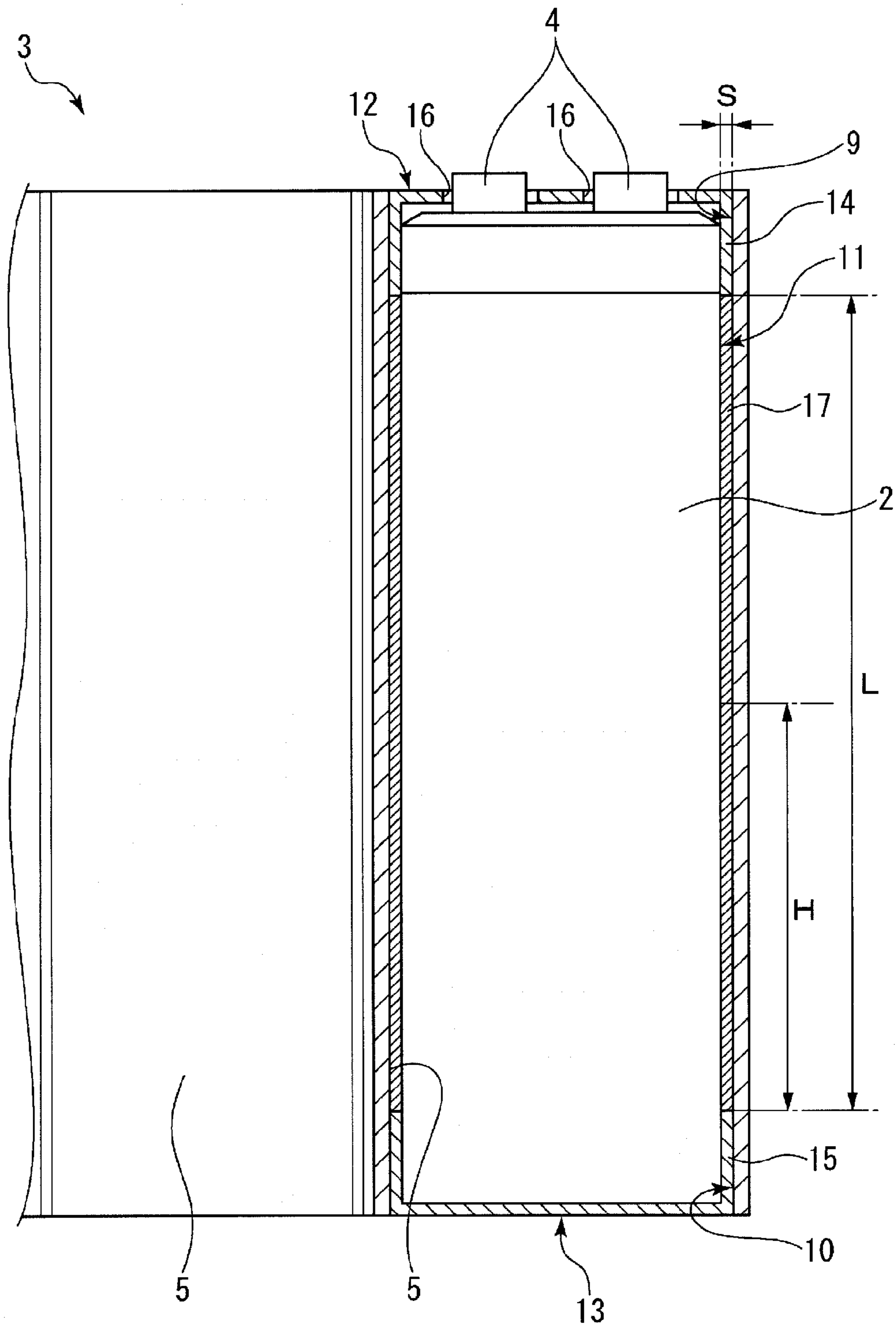


FIG. 7

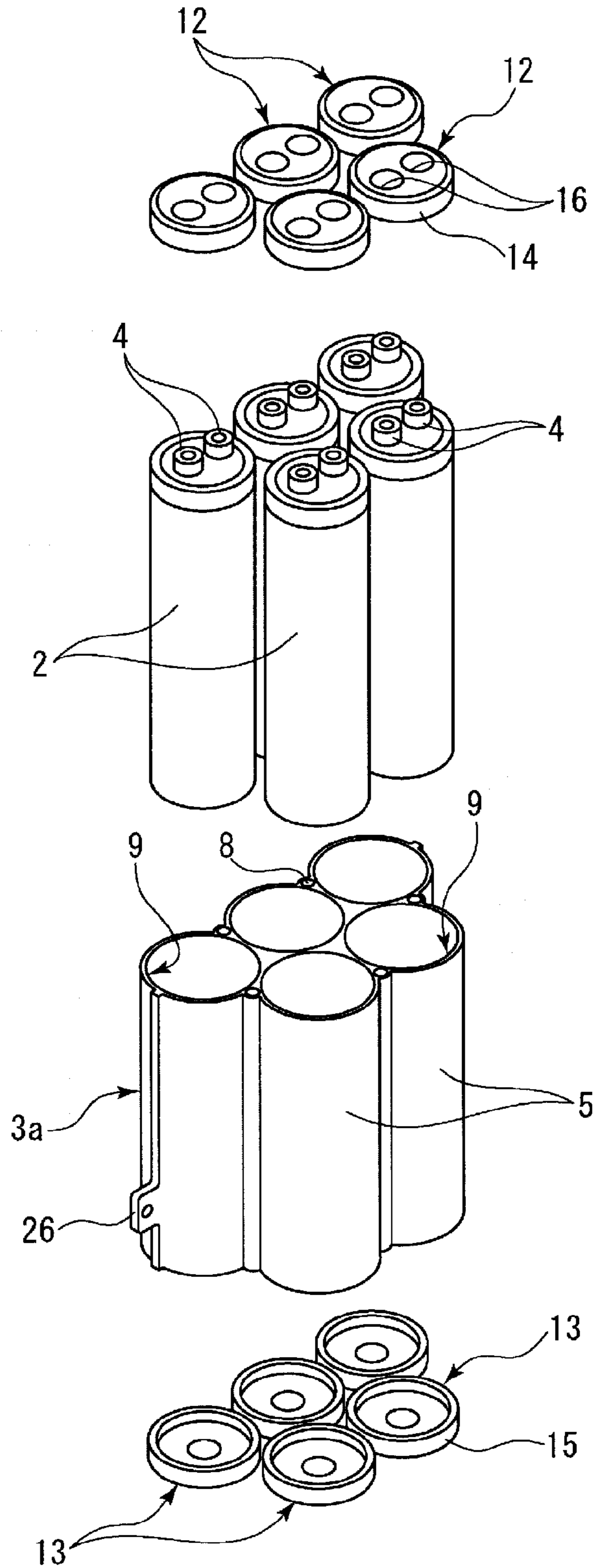


FIG. 8

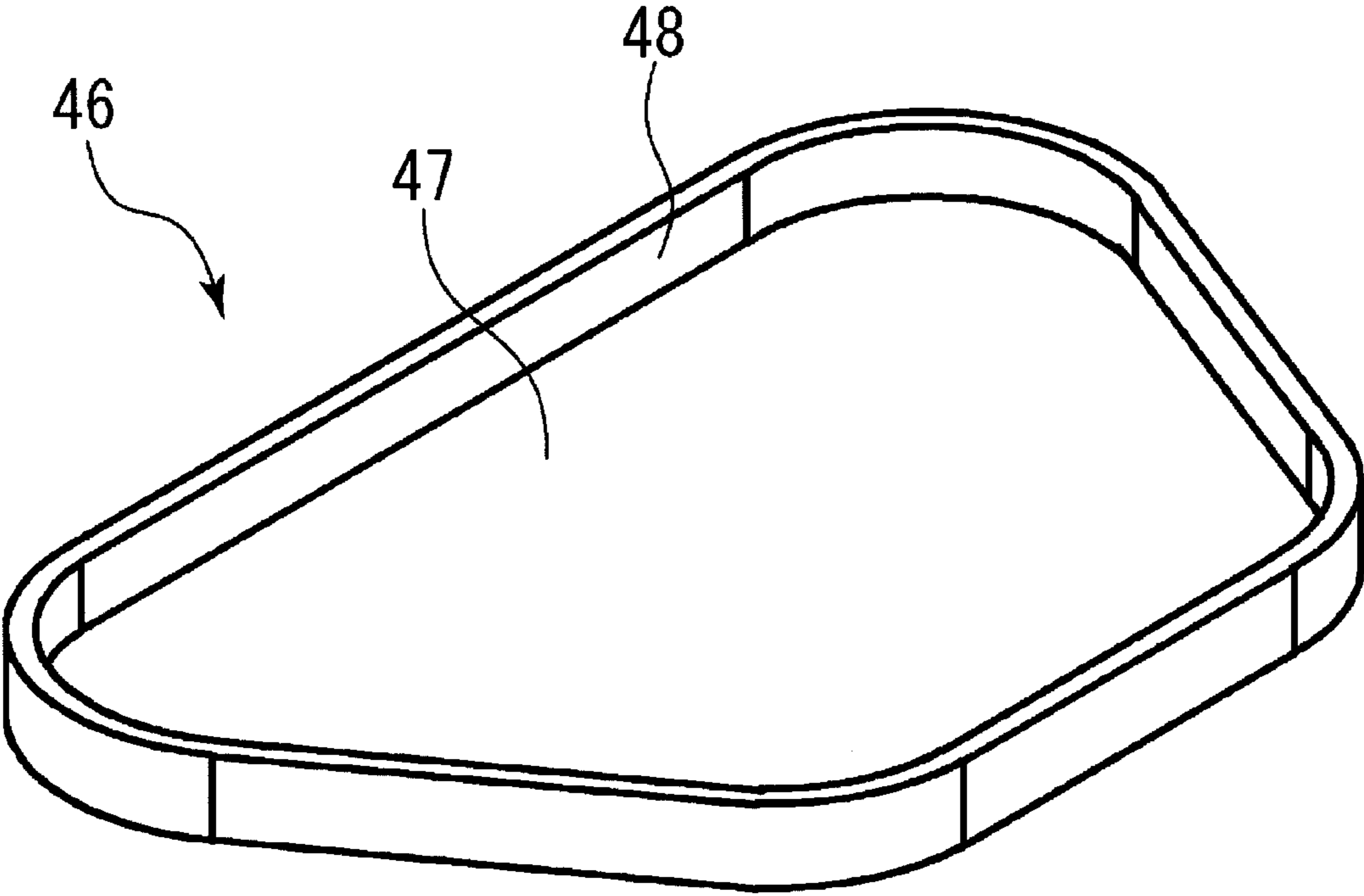


FIG. 9

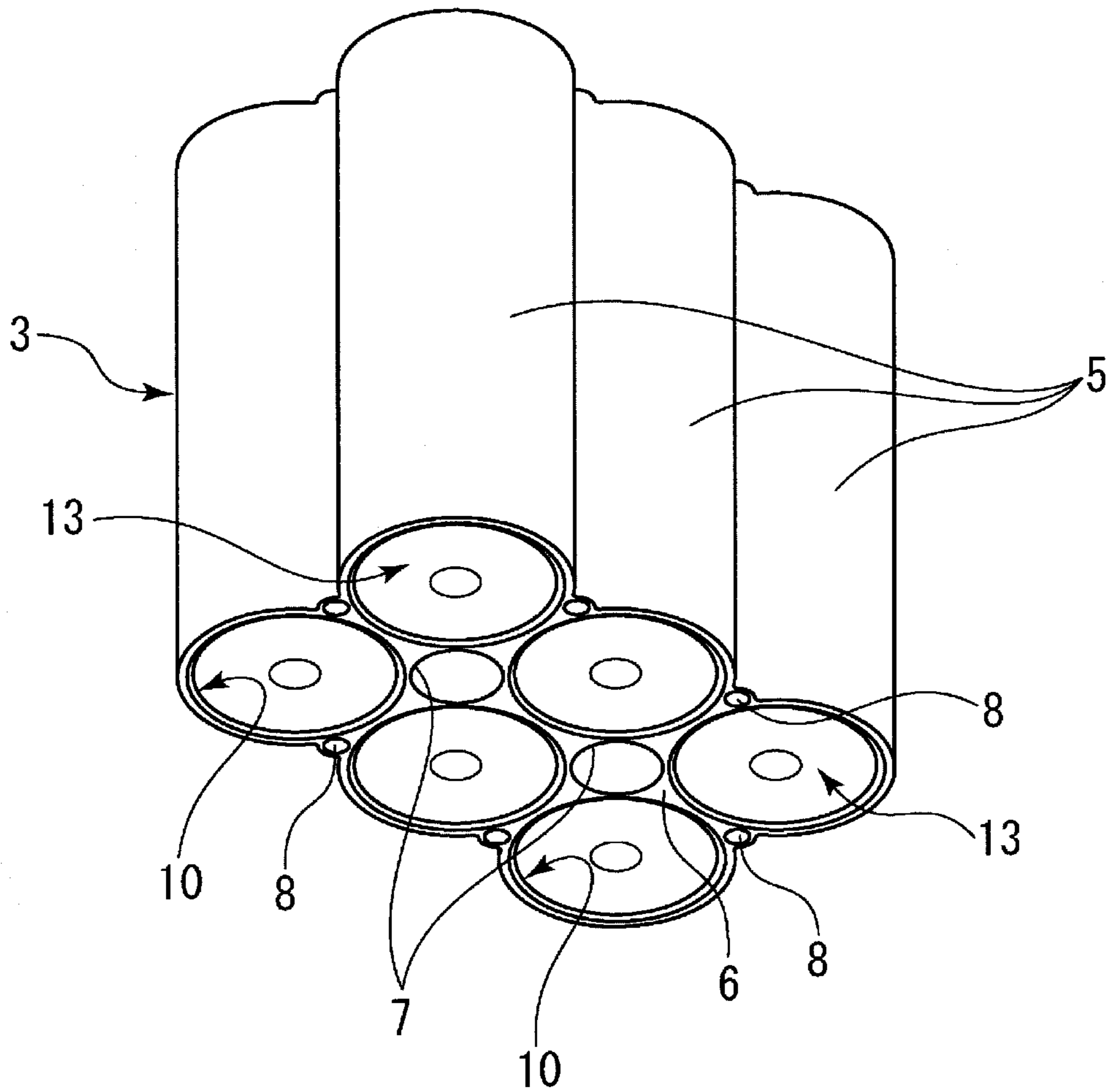
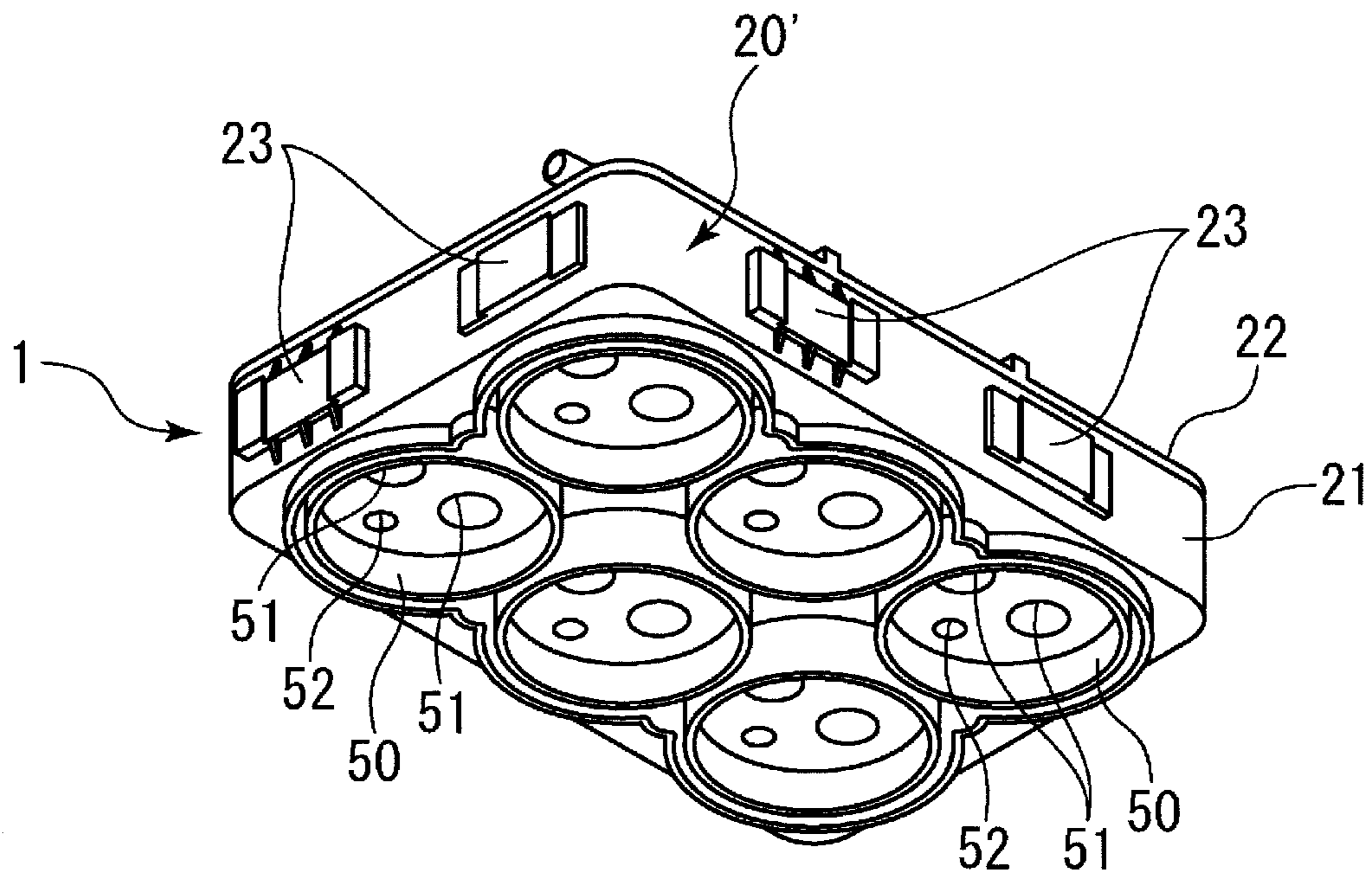


FIG. 10

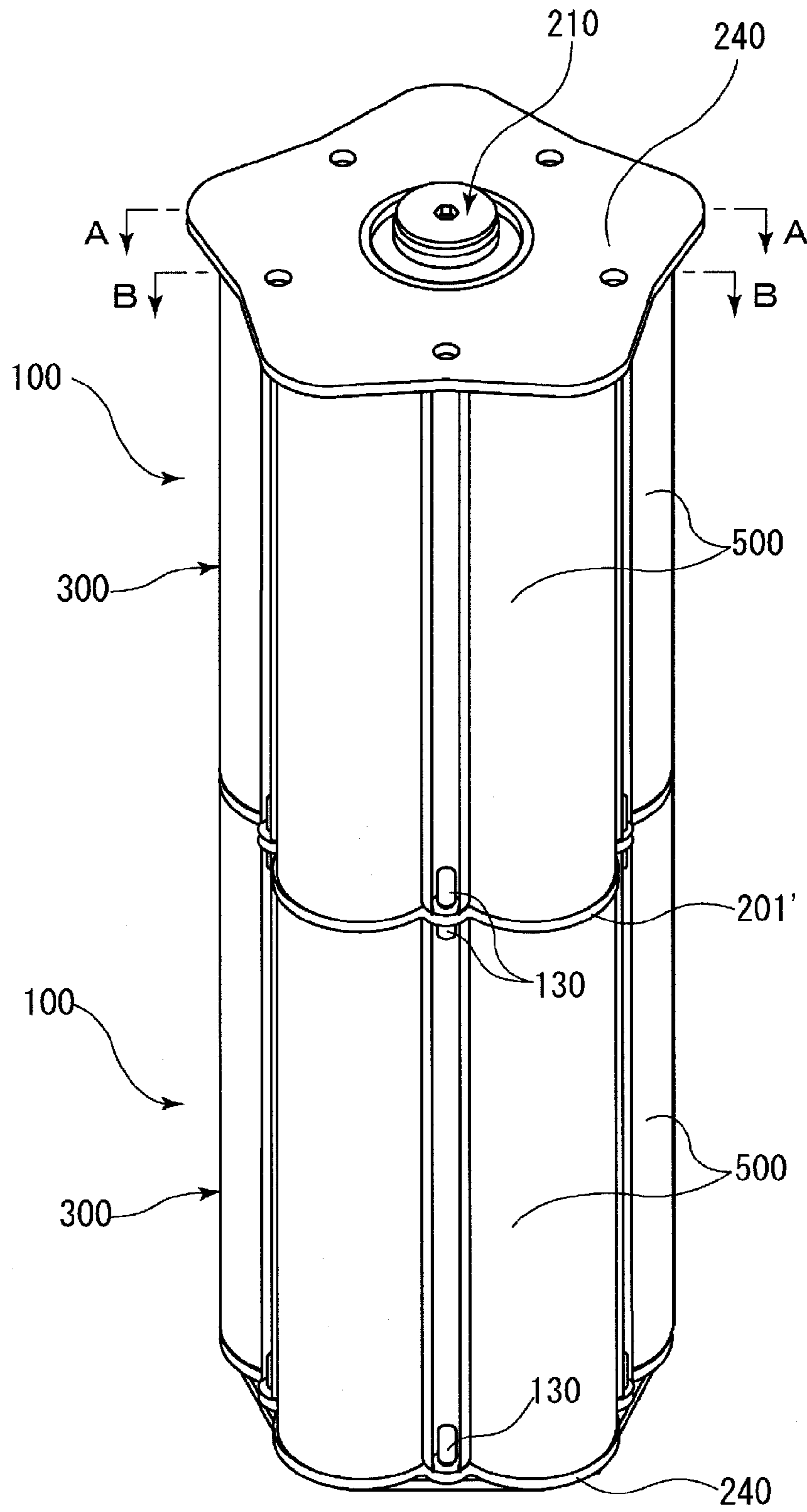


FIG. 11

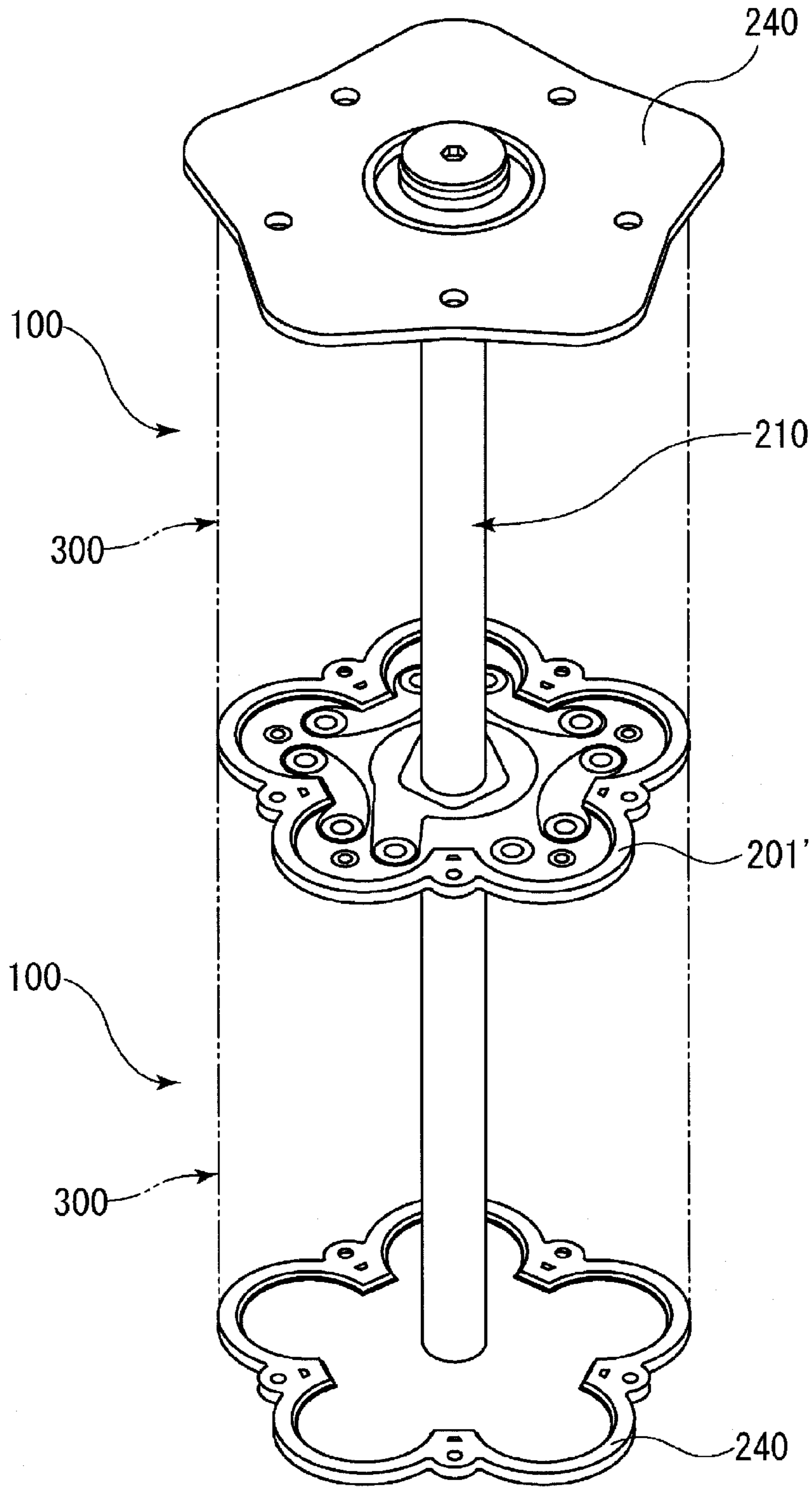


FIG. 12

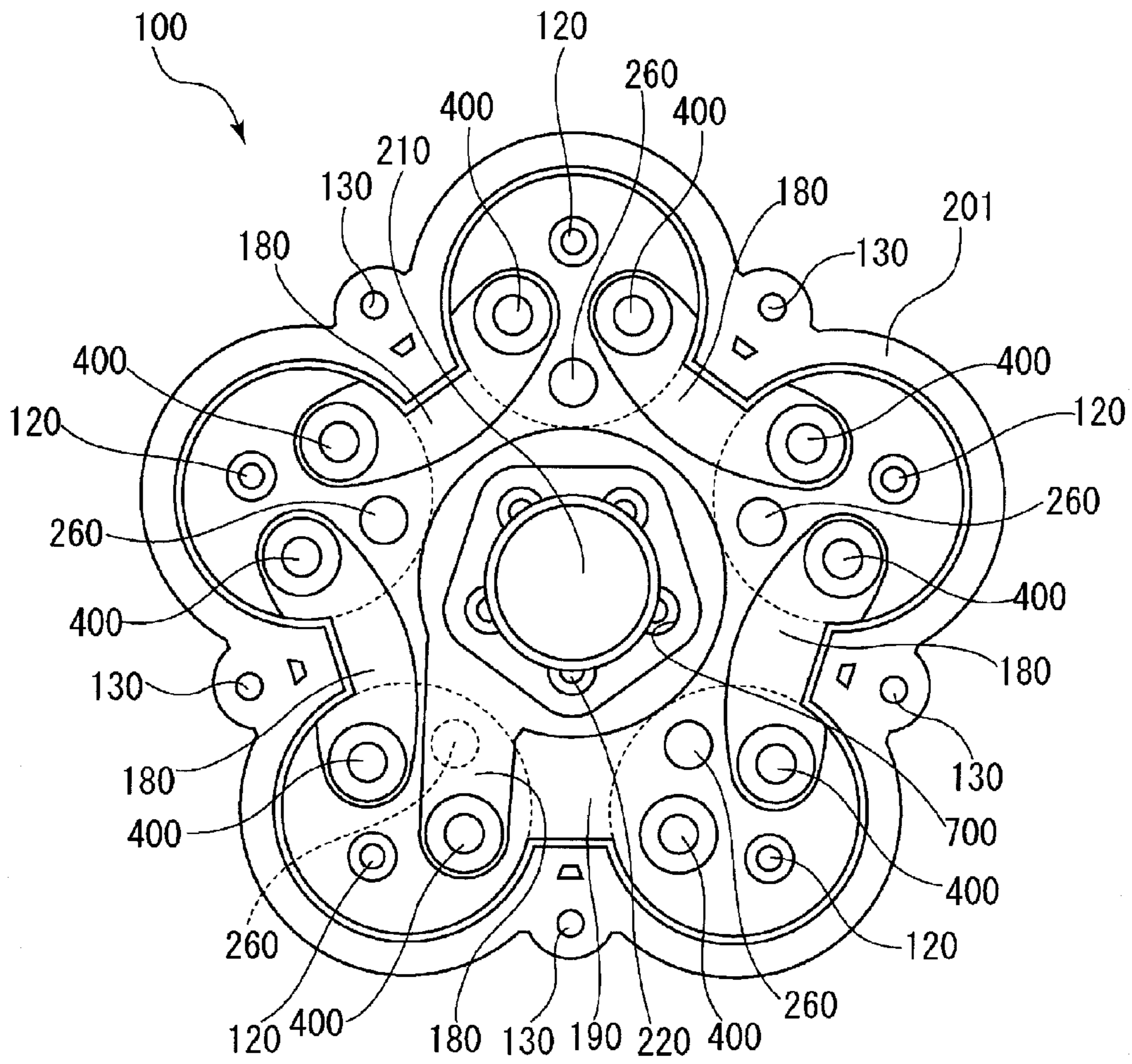


FIG. 13

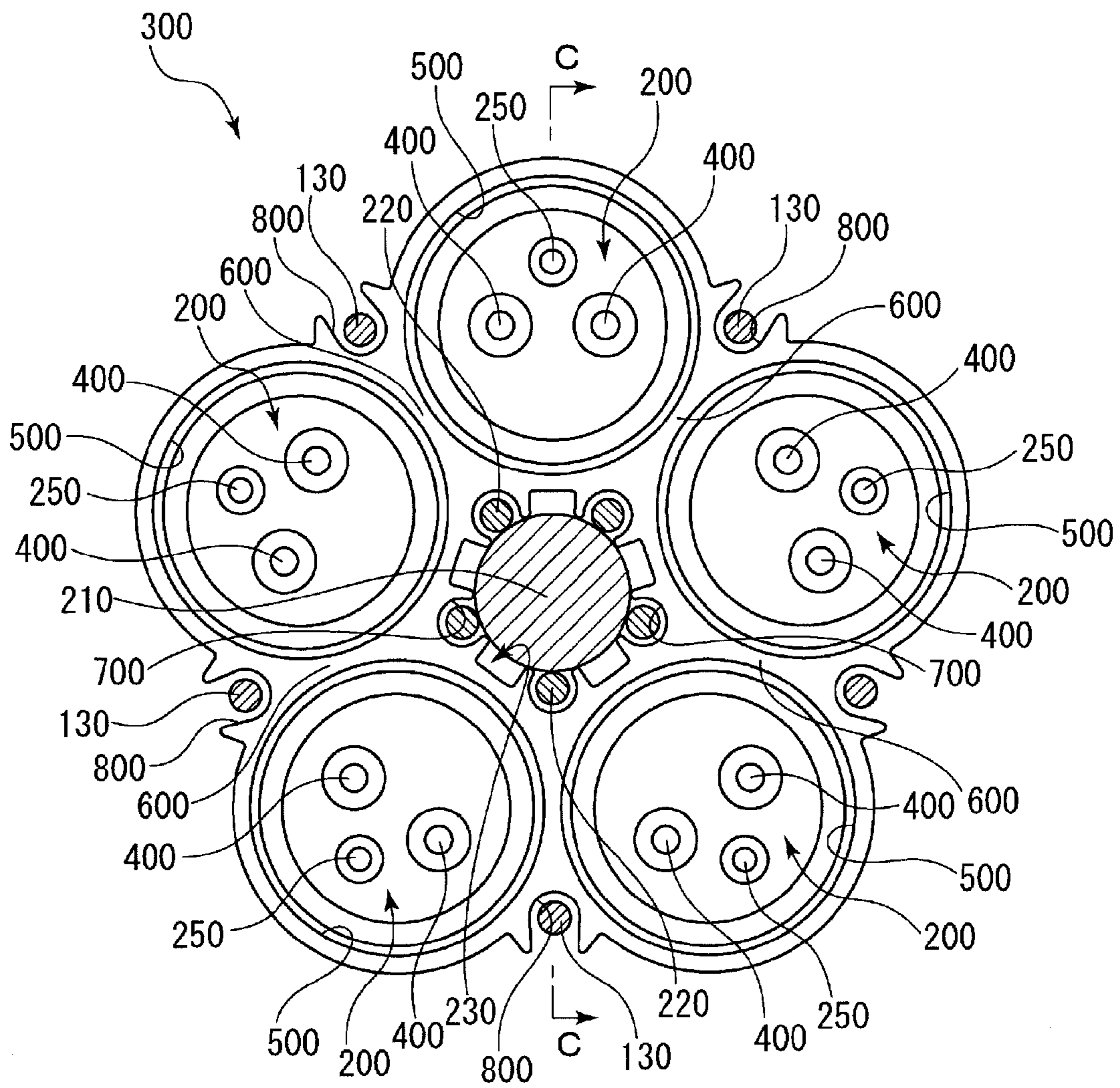


FIG. 14

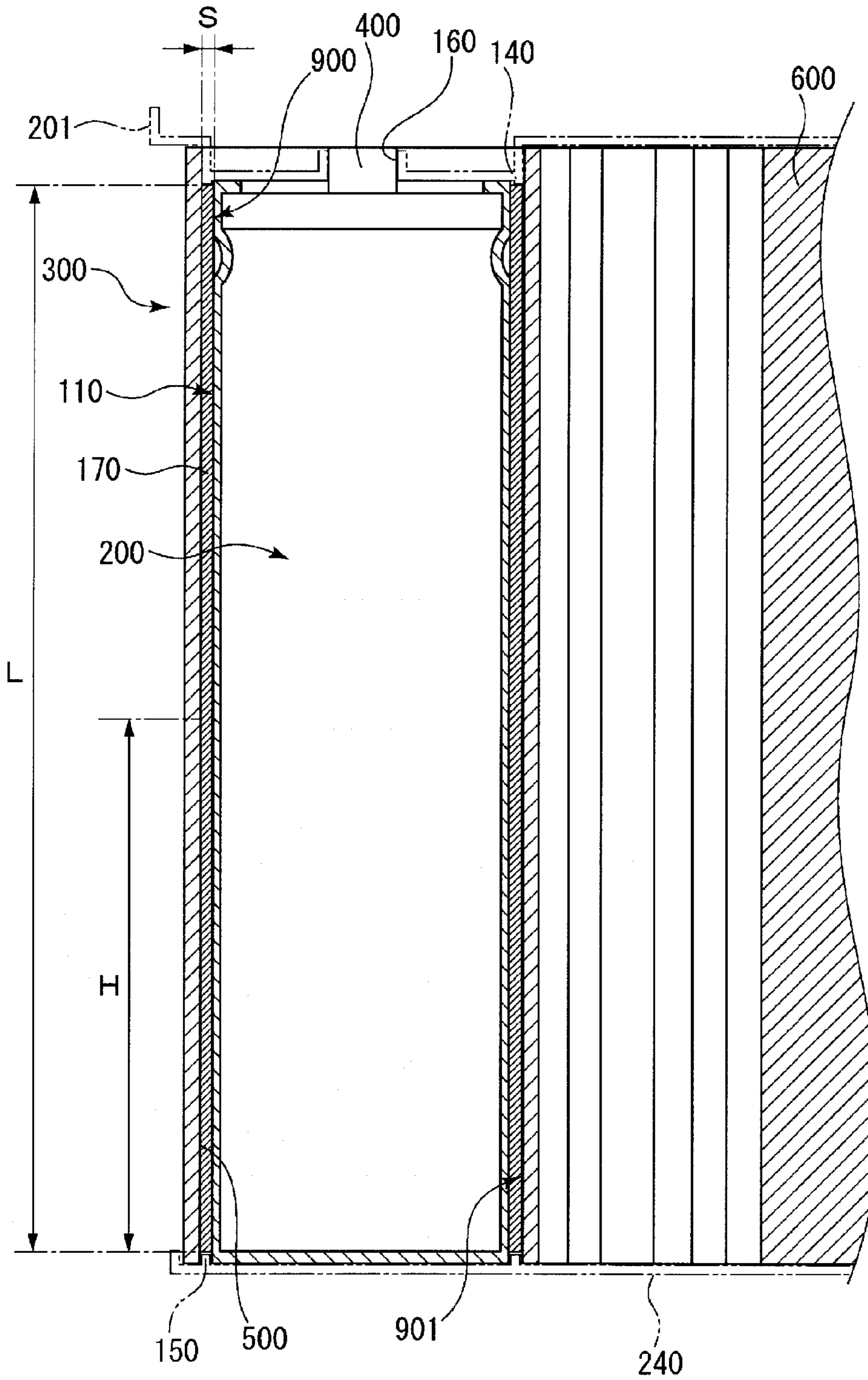


FIG. 15

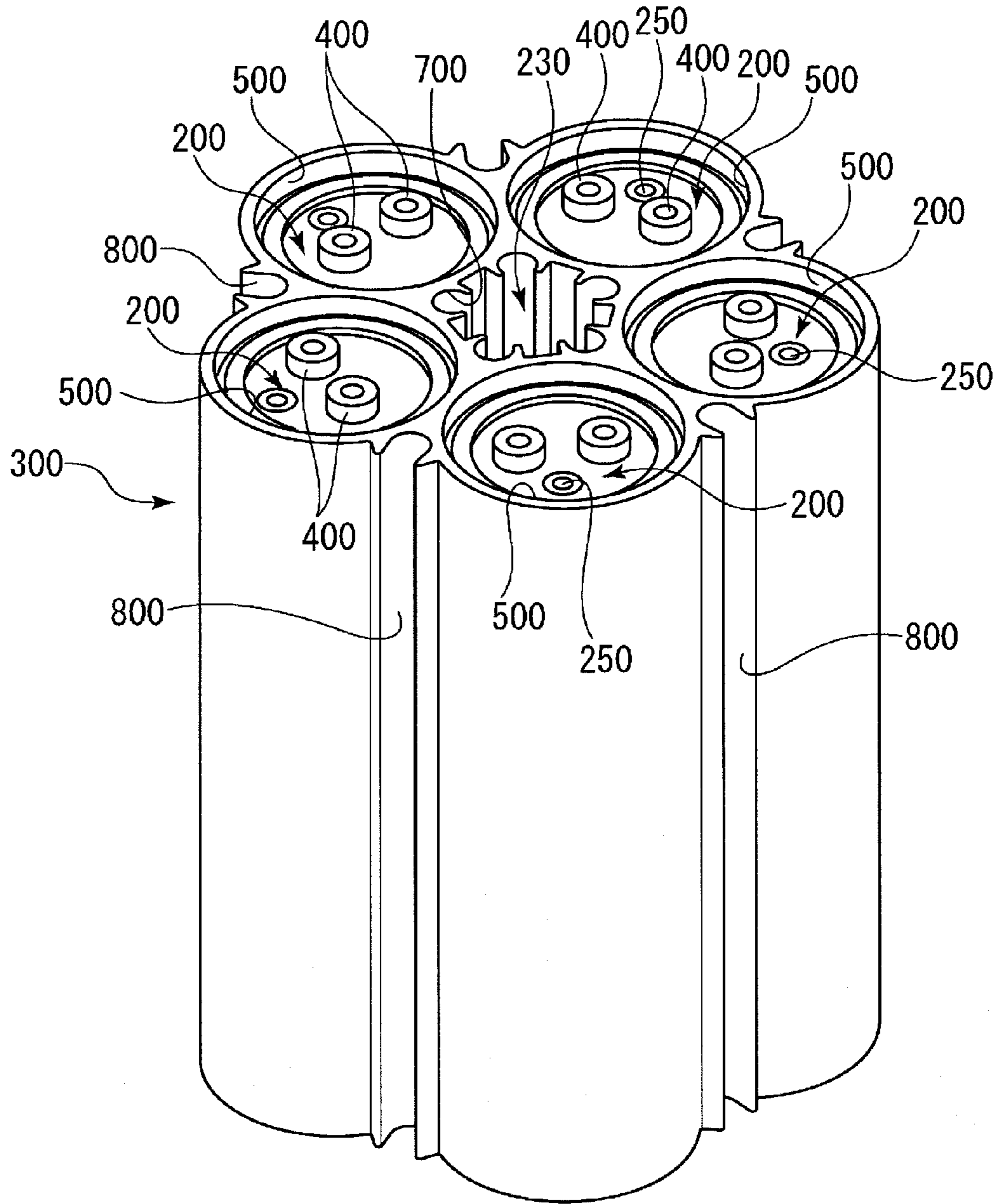
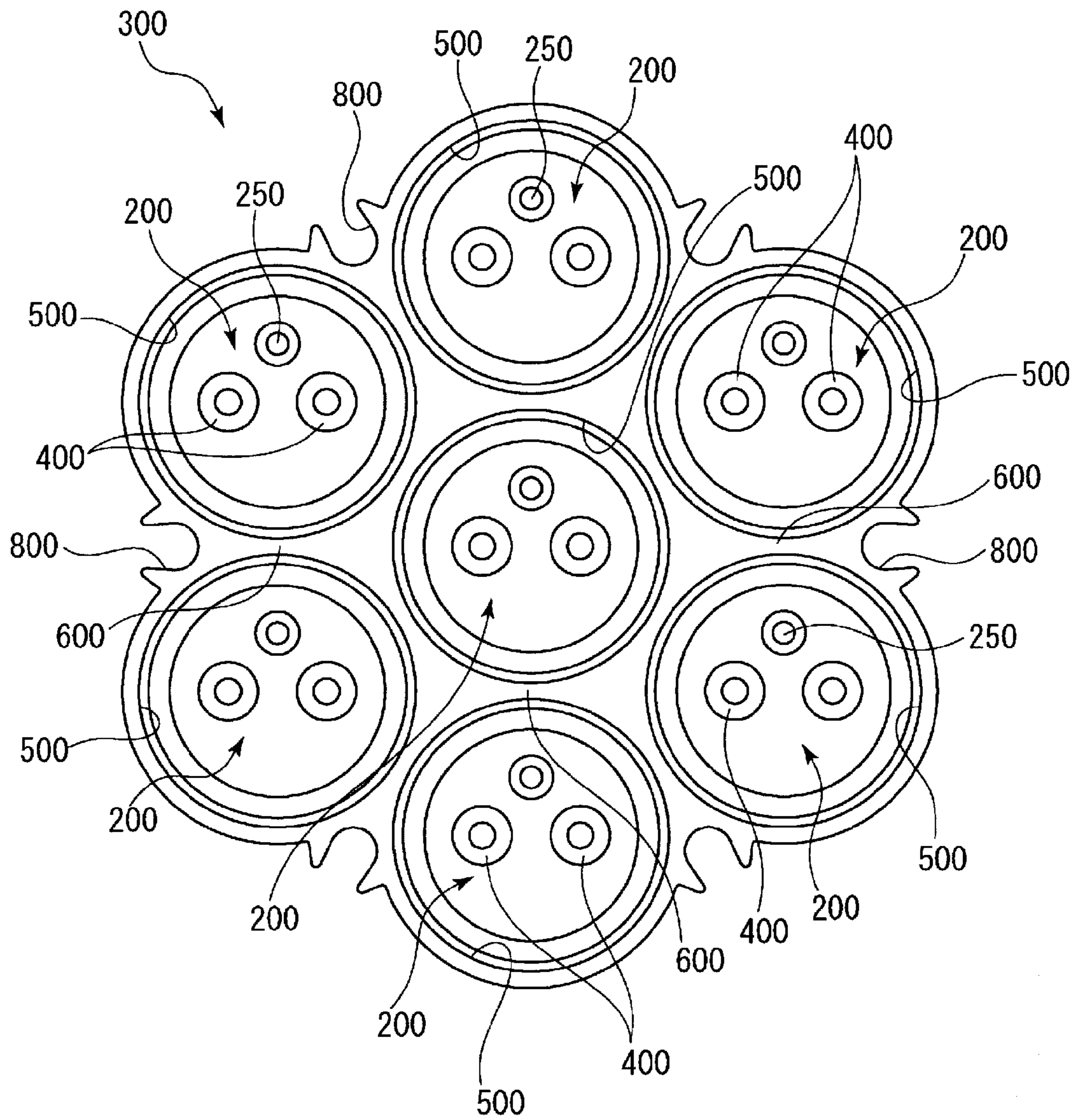


FIG. 16



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CAPACITOR DEVICE AND METHOD FOR MANUFACTURING SAME

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates to a capacitor device where a plurality of capacitor units is housed as an integral whole in a housing case as well as to a method for manufacturing the same.

BACKGROUND ART

Conventional devices with attached capacitors allow capacitors to be inserted into a plurality of holes created in a metal block (see Patent Document 1). In addition, there have been capacitor devices where a capacitor provided with a thermal contracting resin tube around it is attached to a holder having a housing section of which the upper surface is open and the cross-section is in arc form, and the resin tube is heated in a state where the resin tube has been pulled out to the outside through the opening of the holder so as to contract, and thus, the capacitor is held in place (see Patent Document 2).

PRIOR ART DOCUMENTS

Patent Documents

Patent Document 1: Japanese Unexamined Utility Model Publication H6 (1994)-62527

Patent Document 2: Japanese Unexamined Patent Publication 2004-221182

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Problem to be Solved by the Invention

In the device with attached capacitors in Patent Document 1, a plurality of holes is created in a metal block, and therefore, there are such problems that the weight of the device with attached capacitors cannot be reduced, the appearance is bulky, and the heat dissipation properties are poor. In addition, in the capacitor device in Patent Document 2, an opening through which a resin tube is pulled out to the outside must be created in the holder, and such a problem arises that this opening lowers the strength of the holder.

The present invention is provided in view of these problems, and an object of the invention is to provide a capacitor device that can be made slimmer and lighter and that enables the strength and heat dissipation properties to be improved as well as a method for manufacturing the same.

Means for Solving Problem

In order to achieve the above-described object, the capacitor device according to the present invention, where a plurality of capacitor units are integrally housed in a housing case, is characterized in that the above-described housing case has cylindrical housing sections for housing the capacitor units, the cylindrical housing sections are longitudinally aligned in the same direction and are joined together as an integrated whole, the above-described capacitor units are inserted via an opening at an end of the respective housing sections so that the entire circumference of the capacitor units is covered by the corresponding housing sections, and the housing sections have a uniform thickness at least on the outer side along the outer periphery of the above-described

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capacitor units. According to this feature, a plurality of capacitor units is joined together as an integrated whole in such a state that the entire circumference of the capacitor units is held by the housing sections, and the size of the housing sections can be matched with the size of the capacitor units so that the housing sections can be made slimmer and lighter. In addition, the uniform thickness of the housing sections on the outer side along the outer periphery of the capacitor units makes it possible to reduce the weight of the housing case while increasing the strength of the housing case, and at the same time to increase the surface of the housing case, and thus, the heat dissipation properties can be improved.

The capacitor device according to the present invention is characterized in that a plurality of housing sections that form the outer periphery of the above-described housing case is aligned in annular form, and the housing sections along the outer periphery of the housing case have a uniform thickness at least on the outer side along the outer periphery of the above-described capacitor units. According to this feature, the housing sections have a uniform thickness on the outer side along the outer periphery of the capacitor units, and at the same time, a plurality of housing sections that form the outer periphery of the housing case is aligned in annular form, and thus, the area of the outer surface of the housing case can be increased in order to improve the heat dissipation properties and the strength of the housing case can be increased.

The capacitor device according to the present invention is characterized in that the housing sections along the outer periphery of the above-described housing case are aligned in rotation symmetry. According to this feature, uniform force is applied to the housing sections in the outer periphery of the housing case when an external force is applied to the housing case, and thus, the strength of the housing case is increased so that the housing case can be prevented from being deformed.

The capacitor device according to the present invention is characterized in that the above-described housing sections are aligned in staggered form. According to this feature, part of another housing section can be provided between adjacent housing sections so that the housing case can be made slimmer.

The capacitor device according to the present invention is characterized in that a gap is created between the inner surface of the above-described housing sections and the outer surface of the above-described capacitor units so that the gap is filled in with a resin material. According to this feature, the outer periphery of the capacitor units adheres to the inner surface of the housing sections via the resin material so that the capacitor units are firmly secured within the housing sections, and at the same time, the heat conductivity to the housing case is enhanced by the resin material so that the heat dissipation properties are increased.

The capacitor device according to the present invention is characterized in that the opening of the above-described housing sections is closed by a closing member. According to this feature, it is easy to provide the resin material such that the closing member can prevent the resin material from flowing out before hardening.

The capacitor device according to the present invention is characterized in that the above-described closing member is provided with a support for holding a capacitor unit in such a state that a uniform gap is created along the outer surface of the capacitor unit. According to this feature, the support uniformly maintains the gap so that the resin material is uniformly filled in around the capacitor units, and thus, the

strength in the connection between the capacitor units and the housing sections as well as the heat conductivity can be prevented from being uneven.

The capacitor device according to the present invention is characterized in that the above-described housing case is formed through extrusion molding. According to this feature, the housing case can be easily mass-produced so that the capacitor device can be manufactured at a low cost.

The capacitor device according to the present invention is characterized in that a circuit case for housing a circuit unit for electrically connecting the above-described capacitor units is provided at one end of the above-described housing case, and an attachment member for attaching the above-described circuit case is fixed to an attachment portion that is formed together with the above-described housing sections at the time of the above-described extrusion molding. According to this feature, the attachment portion that is formed together with the housing sections at the time of extrusion molding can be used to secure the circuit case, and thus, it is not necessary to separately form a portion for attaching a circuit case on the housing case, and thus, the cost for manufacture of the housing case can be reduced.

The capacitor device according to the present invention is characterized in that the above-described closing member and the circuit case are structurally integrated. According to this feature, the closing member and the circuit case are structurally integrated, and therefore, the attachment to the housing case is easy.

The capacitor device according to the present invention is characterized in that the above-described housing case has a positioning unit in which a connection member for connecting another housing case in its longitudinal direction is to be positioned. According to this feature, the capacitor device runs in the longitudinal direction of the housing case so as to have such a form as to be compact in the direction of the width, and the capacitance can be increased.

The capacitor device according to the present invention is characterized in that the above-described positioning unit is formed in a location surrounded by the housing sections along the outer periphery of the above-described housing case. According to this feature, the connection member in the positioning unit is not exposed to the outside of the housing case, and thus, the connection member can be prevented from corroding, and at the same time, the heat emitted from the capacitor units and the load of the capacitor units are uniformly transferred and applied to the surroundings of the connection member, and therefore, the connection member can be prevented from distorting due to the effects of the heat or the load.

The method for manufacturing a capacitor device according to the present invention is a method for manufacturing a capacitor device where a plurality of capacitor units is integrally housed in a housing case and is characterized in that in the housing case having cylindrical housing sections for housing a plurality of capacitor units, where the housing sections are longitudinally aligned in the same direction and are joined together as an integrated whole, and the housing sections have a uniform thickness at least on the outer side along the outer periphery of the above-described capacitor units, the above-described capacitor units are inserted via an opening at an end of the respective housing sections so that the entire circumference of the capacitor units is covered by the corresponding housing sections. According to this feature, a plurality of capacitor units is joined together as an integrated whole in such a state that the entire circumference of the capacitor units is held by the housing sections, and the size of the housing sections can be matched with the size of

the capacitor units so that the housing sections can be made slimmer and lighter. In addition, the uniform thickness of the housing sections on the outer side along the outer periphery of the capacitor units makes it possible to reduce the weight of the housing case while increasing the strength of the housing case, and at the same time to increase the surface of the housing case, and thus, the heat dissipation properties can be improved.

The method for manufacturing a capacitor device according to the present invention is characterized in that a gap is created between the inner surface of the above-described housing sections and the outer surface of the above-described capacitor units, and the gap is filled in with a resin material. According to this feature, the outer periphery of the capacitor units adheres to the inner surface of the housing sections via the resin material so that the capacitor units are firmly secured within the housing sections, and at the same time, the heat conductivity to the housing case is enhanced so that the heat dissipation properties are increased.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a perspective diagram showing the capacitor device according to the first embodiment;

FIG. 2 is an exploded perspective diagram showing the capacitor device;

FIG. 3 is a perspective diagram showing the capacitor device in a state where a section is omitted;

FIG. 4 is a perspective diagram showing the capacitor device as viewed from the bottom side;

FIG. 5 is a cross-sectional diagram showing the capacitor device as viewed from the bottom side;

FIG. 6 is a cross-sectional diagram showing the capacitor device with part of the housing case omitted as viewed from the front;

FIG. 7 is an exploded perspective diagram showing the capacitor device according to a modification;

FIG. 8 is a perspective diagram showing the closing cap according to a modification;

FIG. 9 is a perspective diagram showing a circuit case according to a modification;

FIG. 10 is a perspective diagram showing two capacitor devices joined together according to the second embodiment;

FIG. 11 is a perspective diagram showing the connection member;

FIG. 12 is a plan diagram showing the circuit case along A-A in FIG. 10;

FIG. 13 is a plan diagram showing the housing case along B-B in FIG. 10;

FIG. 14 is a cross-sectional diagram showing the housing case along C-C in FIG. 13 as viewed from the front;

FIG. 15 is a perspective diagram showing the housing case; and

FIG. 16 is a plan diagram showing the housing case according to a modification.

PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION

The capacitor device according to the present invention is described below on the basis of the embodiments for implementing the invention.

First Embodiment

The capacitor device according to the first embodiment is described below in reference to FIGS. 1 to 6. The symbol 1 in FIG. 1 is the capacitor device to which the present

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invention is applied. In the first embodiment, four capacitor devices 1 are joined together horizontally. Here, these capacitor devices 1 are mainly installed in apparatuses for vehicles or the like for use.

As shown in FIG. 2, one capacitor device 1 integrally houses six capacitor units 2 in a housing case 3. In the present embodiment, an electric double-layer capacitor is used for each capacitor unit 2. These capacitor units 2 are approximately in cylindrical form, and anode and cathode terminals 4 are provided on the top of the capacitor units 2. In addition, six housing sections 5 for housing the capacitor units 2 are created in the housing case 3.

The housing case 3 is formed of a metal material, such as aluminum, through extrusion molding using a die. When the housing case 3 is formed through extrusion molding, the housing case 3 can be easily mass produced so that the capacitor device 1 can be manufactured at a low cost. In addition, the housing sections 5 are approximately in cylindrical form that matches the shape and the size of the capacitor units 2.

As shown in FIG. 5, the housing sections 5 are longitudinally aligned in the same direction and at least parts of them are integrally joined together. Though in the present embodiment, the housing sections 5 are integrally joined together through the entire surface in their longitudinal directions, only parts of them in the longitudinal direction, for example, only the sides on the upper end or on the lower end, may be joined together. In addition, the housing sections are aligned in grid form as viewed from the top, and the shape of the housing case 3 is approximately rectangular parallelepiped. Here, three housing sections 5 are aligned in series from the left to the right in a column, and two columns are side-by-side in the front and rear so as to provide the arrangement of the housing sections 5 in grid form. Furthermore, the joining portion 6 for joining the housing sections 5 together has holes with a large diameter 7 and holes with a small diameter 8 (attachment portions), which are created together with the housing sections 5 at the time of extrusion molding for the housing case 3.

As shown in FIGS. 2 and 4, the housing sections 5 and the holes with a large diameter 7 penetrate through the housing case 3 from the top to the bottom. In addition, the holes with a small diameter 8 are provided in order for the below-described other members to be fixed with screws, and may penetrate through the housing case 3 from the top to the bottom or may have a certain depth from the top or from the bottom. Furthermore, the holes with a large diameter 7 are placed inside the housing case 3, and at the same time, the holes with a small diameter 8 are placed between the housing sections 5 on the outside of the housing case 3 so that the housing case 3 can be made thinner.

As shown in FIGS. 2 and 3, the capacitor units 2 are inserted through the openings 9 on the top of the housing sections 5 and held in such a state that the entire circumference of the sides of the capacitor units 2 is covered by the housing sections 5. Here, at least a part of each housing section 5 (portion other than the joining portion 6) is exposed on the outer side, and on this outer side the housing section 5 has a uniform thickness along the outer periphery of the capacitor unit 2. In addition, the inner diameter of the housing sections 5 is slightly greater than the outer diameter of the capacitor units 2 so that a gap 11 with a predetermined size S is created between the outer periphery of the capacitor unit 2 housed in a housing section 5 and the inner surface of the housing section 5 (see FIG. 6). In the present embodiment, the size S of the gap 11 is approximately 0.5 mm to

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3.0 mm, taking into consideration the heat conductivity and the below-described efficiency for filling in the gap with a resin.

As shown in FIGS. 2 and 4, the openings 9 and 10 on the top and at the bottom of the housing sections 5 are closed by the upper and lower caps 12 and 13 (closing members) that fit into the openings. These upper and lower caps 12 and 13 are approximately in disc form, and the holding pieces 14 and 15 (holding portions) for holding the upper and lower ends of the capacitor units 2 are formed around the entire circumference of the caps. Here, the leading holes 16 for leading out the terminals 4 of a capacitor unit 2 are created in the upper caps 12. Furthermore, the upper and lower caps 12 and 13 have such a function as to close the housing sections 5 for moistureproofing. In addition, a hole may be separately provided in the upper caps 12 in such a location as to correspond to a pressure releasing mechanism provided on the top of the capacitor units, though not shown, so that the pressure within a capacitor unit can be released through the hole when the pressure releasing mechanism is in operation.

Here, the thickness of these holding pieces 14 and 15 is the same as the size of the above-described gap 11 (see FIG. 6). The lower caps 13 allow the holding piece 15 to be engaged with the bottom end of the capacitor unit 2 so that the holding piece 15 prevents the capacitor unit 2 from shaking and the size S of the gap 11 becomes uniform along the outer periphery of the capacitor unit 2. Here, unevenness or undulation may be created in a part of the outer periphery of the holding pieces 14 and 15 that makes contact with the inner surface of the housing section 5, though not shown, so that the engagement with the housing section 5 is enhanced and the tightness in closing the housing sections 5 by the upper and lower caps 12 and 13 can be enhanced.

As shown in FIGS. 5 and 6, the gaps 11 are filled in with a resin material 17 that is a synthetic resin having heat conductivity, such as an epoxy resin or a urethane resin. By doing this, the outer periphery of the capacitor units 2 is adhered to the inner surface of the housing sections 5 through the resin material 17 so that the capacitor units 2 are firmly secured within the housing sections 5, and at the same time, the heat conductivity to the housing case is increased through the resin material 17 so as to increase the heat dissipation properties. Here, it is preferable for the entirety of the gaps 11 between the outer periphery of the capacitor units 2 and the inner surface of the housing sections 5 to be filled in with the resin material 17.

According to one of the methods for filling in the gaps with this resin material 17, first, the capacitor units 2 are inserted into the housing sections 5 and the openings 10 at the bottom of the housing sections 5 are closed with the lower caps 13, and at the same time, the gaps 11 are created when the holding pieces 15 of the lower caps 13 hold the capacitor units 2, and in this state, the melted resin material 17 is flown into the gaps 11 through the openings 9 on the top. Here, the entirety L of the gaps 11 may be filled in with the resin material 17 or the portion H that is approximately half of the gaps 11 may be filled in with the resin material 17, of which the amount for use can be appropriately adjusted.

According to another filling in method, first, the openings 10 at the bottom of the housing sections 5 are closed with the lower caps 13, and in this state, a predetermined amount of melted resin material 17 is flown into the housing sections 5, and after that, the capacitor units 2 are inserted into the housing sections 5. The melted resin material 17 is pushed up along the gap 11 as the capacitor units 2 are inserted so

that the entirety L of the gaps **11** is filled in. In the case where the entirety L of the gaps **11** is not sufficiently filled in, the melted resin material **17** can further be flown into the gap **11** through the openings **9** of the housing sections **5** so that the entirety L of the gaps **11** can be filled in.

According to still another method, the openings **10** of the housing sections **5** at the bottom are closed with the lower caps **13**, the capacitor units **2** are inserted into the housing sections **5**, and the openings **9** of the housing sections **5** on the top are closed with upper caps **12**, in which an injection hole is separately provided, and in this state, a predetermined amount of melted resin material **17** is flown into the housing sections **5** through the injection holes in the upper caps **12** under reduced pressure. In this case, the resin material covers the top of the capacitor units **2**, which increases the effects of moistureproofing and improves the stability of the housing case **3**. In the case where a pressure releasing mechanism is provided on the top of the capacitor units **2**, a partition may be provided around the pressure releasing mechanism so that the pressure releasing mechanism is not covered by the resin material with which the gap is filled in, or an exhaust hole from the pressure releasing mechanism to the outside of the capacitor device (such as a tube) may be provided.

Thus, the lower caps **13** can prevent the resin material **17** from flowing out before hardening, and at the same time, the holding pieces **15** hold the capacitor units so that the gaps **11** are uniform, which allows the gaps to be uniformly filled in with the resin material **17** around the capacitor units **2**, and as a result, the strength for making connection between the capacitor units **2** and the housing sections **5** as well as the heat conductivity between the two can be prevented from becoming uneven.

As shown in FIGS. **3** and **4**, in a state where the capacitor units **2** are housed in the housing case **3**, a circuit case **20** for housing a circuit substrate **19** (circuit unit) provided with a connection member **18** (circuit unit) that electrically connects the terminals **4** of the capacitor units **2** to each other and a balance circuit and the like is attached to the top of the housing case **3**. Here, this circuit case **20** is formed of a member in box shape **21** and a lid member **22**. In addition, the circuit case **20** is secured to the holes with a small diameter **8** provided in the joining portion **6** of the housing case **3** by means of screws (attachment members) (not shown). Though it is preferable for the material of the circuit case to be an insulating resin material of a thermosetting resin, such as an epoxy resin or a phenol resin, or of a thermoplastic resin, such as polybutylene terephthalate or nylon, the material is not limited to these, and a metal material, such as aluminum or stainless steel, may be used. From among these, a polybutylene terephthalate resin having excellent heat stability is preferable.

By doing this, the circuit case **20** can be secured using holes with a small diameter **8** that are created together with the housing sections **5** at the time of extrusion molding, and thus, it is not necessary to separately form portions for attaching the circuit case **20** on the housing case **3** so that the cost for manufacture of the housing case **3** can be lowered. Furthermore, the outer surface of the housing sections **5** and the holes with a large diameter **7** function as a heat dissipating means for dissipating heat that has been conducted from the capacitor units **2** to the housing case **3**. In addition, the holes with a large diameter **7** and the holes with a small diameter **8** can make the housing case **3** lighter.

As shown in FIGS. **1** and **3**, connection portions **23** for connecting the circuit case **20** to other circuit cases are provided on the outer periphery of the circuit case **20**, and

thus, a plurality of capacitor devices **1** can be connected together by means of the connection portions **23**. External connection terminals **24** are provided so as to protrude from the top of the circuit case **20**. Here, when a plurality of capacitor devices **1** is joined together, the external connection terminals **24** are connected to each other by connection jigs **25**. Here, the housing case **3** is approximately in rectangular parallelepiped form according to the present embodiment so that the layout can be made simple when the capacitor device **1** is mounted in a predetermined apparatus.

Next, the capacitor device **1a** according to a modification is described below in reference to FIG. **7**. Here, the same symbols are attached to the same components as in the above-described embodiment, and the same descriptions are not repeated.

As shown in FIG. **7**, in the capacitor device **1a** according to the modification, five capacitor units **2** are integrally housed in a housing case **3a**. In addition, five housing sections **5** for housing a capacitor unit **2** are created in the housing case **3a**.

As shown in FIG. **7**, the housing sections **5** are aligned in a zigzag as viewed from the top. Here, three housing sections **5** out of five are aligned in series from left to right, and the other two housing sections **5** are placed between the housing sections **5** in the zigzag arrangement. Thus, a part of each housing section **5** is placed between two other housing sections **5** in the arrangement, which makes the housing case **3a** slimmer. Here, attachments pieces **26** used when the housing case **3a** is mounted in a predetermined apparatus are formed in the left and right end portions of the housing case. Furthermore, holes with a small diameter **8** (attachment portions) are provided in the joining portion **6** for joining the housing sections **5** together.

As shown in FIG. **7**, as in the first embodiment, in the state where the capacitor units **2** are housed in the housing sections **5**, the openings **9** and **10** on the top and at the bottom of the housing sections **5** are closed by the upper and lower caps **12** and **13** (closing members). Here, in the modification, the capacitor units **2** are arranged in zigzag form, and therefore, the terminals **4** are in close proximity to each other.

As described above, in the capacitor device **1** according to the present modification, a plurality of capacitor units **2** is joined together as an integrated whole in such a state that the entire circumference of the capacitor units **2** is held by the housing sections **5**, and the size of the housing sections **5** can be matched with the size of the capacitor units **2** so that the housing sections **5** can be made slimmer and lighter. In addition, the uniform thickness of the housing sections **5** on the outer side along the outer periphery of the capacitor units **2** makes it possible to reduce the weight of the housing case **3** while increasing the surface of the housing case, and thus, the heat dissipation properties can be improved.

Second Embodiment

The capacitor devices according to the second embodiment are described below in reference to FIGS. **10** to **15**. The symbol **100** in FIG. **10** is the capacitor device to which the present invention is applied. In the second embodiment, two capacitor devices **100** are joined together in the upward and downward directions. These capacitor devices **100** are mainly mounted in an apparatus for vehicles or the like for use.

As shown in FIG. **13**, in one capacitor device **100**, five capacitor units **200** are integrally housed in a housing case **300**. Here, in the present embodiment, an electric double-layer capacitor is used for the capacitor units **200**. These capacitor units **200** are approximately in cylindrical form,

and anode and cathode terminals **400** are provided on the top of the capacitor units **200** (see FIG. 14). In addition, five housing sections **500** for housing a capacitor unit **200** are created in the housing case **300**.

As shown in FIG. 15, the housing case **300** is formed of a metal material, such as aluminum, through extrusion molding using a die. When the housing case **300** is formed through extrusion molding, the housing case **300** can be easily mass produced so that the capacitor device **100** can be manufactured at a low cost. In addition, the housing sections **500** are approximately in cylindrical form that matches the shape and the size of the capacitor units **200**.

As shown in FIGS. 13 and 15, the housing sections **500** are longitudinally directed in the same direction and at least parts of them are integrally joined together. Though in the present embodiment, as shown in FIG. 15, the housing sections **500** are integrally joined together through the entire surface in their longitudinal directions, only parts of them in the longitudinal direction, for example, only the sides on the upper end or on the lower end, may be joined together. In addition, the housing sections **500** are arranged in annular form as viewed from the top. Here, a center portion **230** in which the below-described connection member **210** is placed is formed in the center portion of the housing sections **500** that are arranged in annular form.

Namely, the center portion **230** is provided at the center of the housing case **300** as viewed from the top, and at the same time, the five housing sections **500** are arranged in rotational symmetry with this center portion as an axis. By doing this, uniform force is applied to the housing sections **500** in the outer periphery of the housing case **300** when an external force is applied to the housing case **300**, and thus, the strength of the housing case **300** is increased so that the housing case **300** can be prevented from being deformed.

Furthermore, small trenches **800** are created in the joining portion **600** for joining the housing sections **500** together. The center portion **230**, the joining portion **600** and the small trenches **800** are created together with the housing sections **500** at the time of extrusion molding of the housing case **300**.

As shown in FIGS. 11 and 13, the housing sections **500** and the center portion **230** penetrate through the housing case **300** from the top to the bottom. In addition, small trenches **800** are provided in order to secure the housing case **300** to the below-described circuit case **201** or the connection plate **240** by means of screws **130**, and may be created from the top to the bottom of the housing case **300** or may have a certain length from the top or from the bottom of the housing case **300**. In addition, the center portion **230** is placed inside the housing case **300**. Auxiliary trenches **700** that are similar to the above-described small trenches **800** are created in the inner side of this center portion **230**. Auxiliary members **220** in rod form for aiding the below-described connection member **210** can be provided in these auxiliary trenches **700**.

As shown in FIGS. 13 and 14, the capacitor units **200** are inserted through the openings **900** on the top of the housing sections **500** so as to be held in such a state that the entire circumference of the sides of the capacitor units **200** is covered by the housing sections **500**. Here, the outside of the housing sections **500** that form the outer periphery of the housing case **300** has a uniform thickness along the outer periphery of the capacitor units **200**. In addition, the inner diameter of the housing sections **500** is slightly greater than the outer diameter of the capacitor units **200** so that gaps **110** having a predetermined size *S* are created between the outside of the capacitor units **200** that are housed in the housing sections **500** and the inner surface of the housing

sections **500** (see FIG. 14). In the present embodiment, the size *S* of the gaps **110** is approximately 0.5 mm to 3.0 mm, taking into consideration the heat conductivity and the below-described efficiency for filling in the gaps with a resin.

As shown in FIG. 14, in the state where the capacitor units **200** are housed in the housing case **300**, a circuit case **201** for housing a circuit substrate **190** (circuit unit) on which connection members **180** for electrically connecting the terminals **400** of the capacitor units **200** to each other (circuit unit) and a balance circuit and the like are provided is attached to the top of the housing case **300**.

Here, this circuit case **201** is secured to the small trenches **800** provided in the connection portions **600** of the housing case **300** by means of screws (attachment members) (not shown). By doing this, the circuit case **201** can be secured using the small trenches **800** that are created together with the housing sections **500** at the time of extrusion molding, and thus, it is not necessary to separately create portions for attaching the circuit case **201** in the housing case **300** so that the cost for manufacturing the housing case **300** can be reduced. Though it is preferable for the material of the circuit case to be an insulating resin material of a thermosetting resin, such as an epoxy resin or a phenol resin, or of a thermoplastic resin, such as polybutylene terephthalate or nylon, the material is not limited to this, and a metal material, such as aluminum or stainless steel, may be used. From among these, a polybutylene terephthalate resin that is excellent in heat stability is preferable.

In addition, a connection plate **240** can be attached to the bottom of the housing case **300**. The top and bottom openings **900** and **901** of the housing sections **500** are closed by the circuit case **201** and the connection plate **240** (see FIG. 14). Supports **140** and **150** for supporting the top and the bottom of the capacitor units **200** are formed on the circuit case **201** and the connection plate **240**.

Here, as shown in FIG. 12, leading holes **160** for leading out the terminals **400** of the capacitor units **200**, openings **120** provided in such locations as to correspond to the pressure releasing mechanisms **250** provided on the top of the capacitor units **200** (see FIG. 13), and injection holes **260** through a melted resin material **170** can be flown into are created in the circuit case **201**. The pressure within a capacitor unit **200** can be released through the opening **120** when the pressure releasing mechanism **250** is in operation.

The thickness of the supports **140** and **150** is the same size as the above-described gaps **110** (see FIG. 14). These supports **140** and **150** prevent the capacitor units **200** from shaking, and the size *S* of the gaps **110** is uniform along the outer periphery of the capacitor units **200**.

As shown in FIG. 14, the gaps **110** are filled in with a resin material **170** that is a synthetic resin having heat conductivity, such as an epoxy resin or a urethane resin. Thus, the outer periphery of the capacitor units **200** is adhered to the inner surface of the housing sections **500** with the resin material **170** in between so that the capacitor units **200** are firmly secured within the housing sections **500**, and at the same time, the heat conductivity to the housing case is increased through the resin material **170**, which increases the heat dissipation properties. Here, it is preferable for the entirety of the gap **110** between the outer periphery of the capacitor units **200** and the inner surfaces of the housing sections **500** to be filled in with the resin material **170**.

According to one of the filling in methods for filling the gaps with this resin material **170**, first, the capacitor units **200** are inserted into the housing sections **500**, and then, the circuit case **201** and the connection plate **240** are attached to

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the top and the bottom of the housing sections **500** so that the opening **900** and **901** on the top and at the bottom of the housing sections **500** are closed, and in this state where the gaps **110** are created, a melted resin material **170** is flown into the gaps **110** through the injection holes **260** in the circuit case **201** under reduced pressure. Here, the entirety L of the gaps **110** may be filled in with the resin material **170** or the portion H that is approximately half of the gaps **110** may be filled in with the resin material **170** of which the amount for use can be appropriately changed.

Thus, the connection plate **240** can prevent the resin material **170** from flowing out before hardening, and at the same time, the supports **150** maintain the gaps **110** uniform so that the spaces around the capacitor units **200** can be uniformly filled in with the resin material **170**, and thus, the strength of the connection between the capacitor units **200** and the housing sections **500** as well as the heat conductivity can be prevented from becoming uneven. Here, partitions may be provided around the pressure releasing mechanisms formed on the top of the capacitor units **2** so that the pressure releasing mechanisms are not covered by the resin material with which the gaps are filled in, or exhaust holes from the pressure releasing mechanisms to the outside of the capacitor device (such as tubes) may be provided.

Furthermore, a connection plate **240** that is the same as the connection plate **240** attached to the bottom of the housing case **300** is attached to the top of the circuit case **201** on the top of the housing case **300**. In addition, capacitor devices **100** are joined together vertically so that the connection plate **240** and the circuit case **201** are provided on the top of the upper capacitor device **100**, the connection plate **240** is provided at the bottom of the lower capacitor device **100**, and a circuit case **201'** having the same structure as the connection plates **240** is provided between the upper and lower capacitor devices **100** and **100**.

Furthermore, a connection member **210** is provided in order to join and secure the upper and lower connection plates **240**, **240**. This connection member **210** is in rod form that runs in the longitudinal direction of the housing cases **300** of the upper and lower capacitor devices **100**. Since the upper and lower capacitor devices **100** are joined together by means of the connection member **210**, the capacitor devices **100** run in the longitudinal direction of the housing cases **300** so as to be compact in the direction of the width and can increase the capacitance.

The connection member **210** is provided in the above-described center portions **230** of the respective housing cases **300**. This connection member **210** makes the upper and lower capacitor devices **100** join as an integrated whole. As described above, the center portions **230** are surrounded by the housing sections **500** in the outer periphery of the housing cases **300**, and thus, it is not necessary for the connection member **210** in the center portions **230** to be exposed to the outside of the housing cases **300** so that the connection member **210** can be prevented from corroding, and the heat emitted from and the load of the capacitor units **200** are conveyed and applied uniformly around the connection member **210**, and therefore, the connection member **210** can be prevented from distorting due to the effects of the heat or the load.

Next, the capacitor device according to a modification is described in reference to FIG. **16**. Here, the same symbols are attached to the same components as in the above-described embodiment, and the same descriptions are not repeated.

As shown in FIG. **16**, seven housing sections **500** for housing a capacitor unit **200** are created in the housing case

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300 according to the modification. One housing section **500** is created at the center of the housing case **300**, and six housing sections **500** are arranged in annular form around this housing section **500** at the center. In addition, the outer part of the housing sections **500** in the outer periphery has a uniform thickness along the outer periphery of the capacitor units **200**.

As described above, in the capacitor device **100** according to the second embodiment, a plurality of capacitor units **200** are joined as an integrated whole in such a state that the entire circumference of the capacitor units **200** is supported by the housing sections **500**, and at the same time, the size of the housing sections **500** can be matched the size of the capacitor units **200** so that the housing sections **500** can be made slimmer and lighter. In addition, the outer part of the housing sections **500** has a uniform thickness along the outer periphery of the capacitor units **200**, and the housing sections **500** for forming the outer periphery of the housing case **300** are arranged in annular form so that the strength of the housing case **300** can be increased while increasing the area of the outside of the housing case **300** and improving the heat dissipation properties.

Though the embodiments of the present invention are described in the above in reference to the drawings, implemented structures are not limited to these embodiments, and any modifications and additions can be included in the present invention as long as the gist of the present invention is not deviated from.

For example, though electric double-layer capacitors are used as the capacitors in the first and second embodiments, the capacitors to which the present invention is applied are not limited to these, and various types of capacitors, such as electrolytic capacitors and electrochemical capacitors, can be used.

Though capacitor units in cylindrical form are illustrated in the first and second embodiments, the present invention is not limited to these and can be applied to non-cylindrical capacitors, such as in prism form. In the case of capacitors in prism form, the housing sections in the housing case may be in square cylindrical form that matches the prism form so that at least the outer part of the housing sections in the outer periphery of the housing case can have a uniform thickness along the outer periphery of the capacitor units.

Though the housing case **3** is formed through extrusion molding according to the first and second embodiments, the present invention is not limited to these, and casting can be used such that a metal material, such as aluminum, is heated at a temperature that is higher than the melting point of the material so as to be converted to a liquid, which is then flown into a die, and thus, the housing case **3** is formed after cooling.

Though upper and lower caps **12** and **13** are separately attached to the openings **9** and **10** of the housing sections **5** according to the first embodiment, as shown in FIG. **8**, an integrated closing cap **46** may be used. This closing cap **46** has such a form as to cover the entirety of the top or the bottom of the housing case **3** and has a bottom plate **47** for covering the openings **10** at the bottom of the housing sections **5** and a wall **48** formed around this bottom plate **47**. When an integrated closing cap **46** is thus provided, attachment to the housing case **3** is made easy.

Though the upper and lower caps **12** and **13** are attached to the openings **9** and **10** of the housing sections **5** and a circuit case **20** is attached to the top of the housing case **3** according to the first embodiment, the present invention is not limited to this structure, and as shown in FIG. **9**, the upper caps **12** and the circuit case **20** can have an integrated

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structure. By using this circuit case **20'** having an integrated structure, attachment is possible in one step, unlike the first embodiment where the upper caps **12** and the circuit case **20** are attached to the housing case **3** in separate steps, and thus, the process can be made simpler. In addition, in this circuit case **20'**, caps **50** for closing the openings **9** of the housing sections **5**, leading holes **51** for leading out the terminals **4** of the capacitor units **2**, and injection holes **52** through which a melted resin material **17** can be flown into are created at the bottom of the circuit case **20'**. Furthermore, the circuit case **20'** is secured to the holes with a small diameter **8** provided in the joining portion **6** of the housing case **3** by means of screws, and therefore, the caps **50** in the integrated structure can be firmly secured to the housing case **3** with high precision.

Though the housing cases **3** and **300** are formed through extrusion molding according to the first and second embodiments, the present invention is not limited to these, and casting can be used such that a metal material, such as aluminum, is heated at a temperature higher than the melting point of the material so as to be converted to a liquid, which is then flown into a mold, and thus, a housing case **3** or **300** is formed after cooling. According to another method, a housing case **3** or **300** can be formed of a metal plate, such as of aluminum, through impact extrusion molding. Typically, a metal plate is placed within a lower die having a plurality of recesses, and a plurality of punches having a diameter that is smaller than that of the recesses is lowered towards the recesses so as to hit against the metal plate. The metal plate is sandwiched between the punches and the recesses in the lower die and pressed so as to change its form so that the metal plate is expanded along the sides of the punches, and a plurality of cylinders with a bottom that are joined to each other is provided. Thus, the housing case **3** or **300** having housing sections **5** or **500** in cylindrical form can be formed as shown in the embodiments. When impact extrusion molding is thus used, the time for manufacturing the housing case **3** or **300** can be shortened and the cost can be lowered.

Though in the first and second embodiments the openings **10** and **901** of the housing sections **5** and **500** in cylindrical form of the housing cases **3** and **300** are closed by attaching lower caps **13**, an integrated closing cap **46** or a connection plate **240** separately to the bottom of the housing sections **5** and **500**, the present invention is not limited to these, and the bottom of the housing sections **5** and **500** may be integrally formed so that housing sections **5** and **500** in cylindrical form having a bottom can be provided when the housing cases **3** and **300** are formed through extrusion molding. As a result, it is necessary to separately provide the lower caps **13**, the integrated closing cap **46** or the connection plate **240**, and the manufacturing process can be made simpler.

Though five housing sections **500** are created according to the second embodiment and six housing sections **500** are created around one housing section **500** at the center according to the modification of the second embodiment, the number of housing sections **500** and the arrangement thereof are not particularly limited, and any structure where housing sections **500** are arranged in annular form in the outer periphery of the housing case **300** falls within the present invention.

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Though in the first and second embodiments the housing case is made of a metal material, such as aluminum, in order to increase the heat dissipation properties, the present invention is not limited to this, and the housing case may be made of a resin material. As the resin material (thermoplastic resin), polyethylene, polypropylene, polyethylene terephthalate, polybutylene terephthalate nylon, polyphenylene sulfide, acryl and polycarbonate are preferable. From among these, polypropylene and polybutylene terephthalate are preferable from the point of view of resistance to heat. In addition, additives (glass fibers) can be added to any of the various types of resin material so that the strength and the heat resistance properties can be increased.

EXPLANATION OF SYMBOLS

- 1, 1a** capacitor device
- 2** capacitor unit
- 3, 3a** housing case
- 5** housing section
- 8** hole with small diameter (attachment portion)
- 9, 10** opening
- 11** gap
- 12** upper cap (closing member)
- 13** lower cap (closing member)
- 14, 15** support piece (support)
- 17** resin material
- 18** connection member (circuit unit)
- 19** circuit substrate (circuit unit)
- 20, 20'** circuit case

The invention claimed is:

1. A method for manufacturing a capacitor device, comprising the steps of:
 - forming a plurality of capacitor units integrally housed in a housing case, wherein
 - the housing case has cylindrical housing sections for housing a plurality of capacitor units, with the housing sections longitudinally aligned in the same direction and joined together by a joining portion as an integrated whole,
 - a portion of the housing sections other than the joining portion is exposed on an outer side,
 - the housing sections on the outer side have a uniform thickness along an outer periphery of said capacitor units,
 - inserting said capacitor units via an opening at an end of the respective housing sections so that an entire circumference of the capacitor units is covered by the corresponding housing sections,
 - filling in with a resin material a gap that is formed between an inner surface of said housing sections and an outer surface of said capacitor units,
 - closing said opening of the housing sections by a closing member which is integrated with a circuit case for housing a circuit unit for electrically connecting said capacitor units, and
 - fixing said closing member to said opening.

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